

# Your Patriarchal Blessing

## A Gift from God

Throughout the years of the history of mankind, God has provided various events in our lives that he hopes will stabilize and stay the course on our journey of life back into his presence. Some of these events are physical, and some are of a spiritual nature. The patriarchal blessing is an ordinance of the church and is spiritual in nature. It provides comfort, counsel, and guidance, which is lifelong in quality.

The meaning of the words blessed and blessing is happy. In our discussion, happiness is not a warm fuzzy, feel good, or any other pleasant feeling. It is more like the quality of happiness found in the meaning of joy, as in, **“men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 1:115)**. A patriarchal blessing is a special laying on of hands ordinance given by a patriarch of the church and is intended to bring to the church member counsel, guidance, and help in living their life in a way that will produce righteousness, everlasting joy, and fulfillment. It is granted because of the person’s need and because of God’s great love for the person. We, of ourselves, lack the insight, wisdom, and power to live such a life. Because of God’s love, he desires such a life for each of his creation and offers his help in many ways, one of which is this ordinance. It is an excellent example of God and his creation working together: God and the patriarch in giving the blessing; God and the individual in using the blessing.

In the Restoration, Joseph Smith, Sr., the first patriarch, adopted the idea presented in the Bible and the Book of Mormon of the father of the family giving a blessing to each of his children and gave a father’s blessing to his son, Joseph Smith, Jr. He then adapted it in giving fatherly spiritual blessings to members of his extended family and the faithful church members. Since then, there has been development in the understanding of the nature and purpose of the ministry of the patriarchal blessing.

Unlike baptism, a patriarchal blessing is not a requirement; it is a gift made available for the benefit of church members. Like baptism, it is participated in by the church member’s own choosing. In both ordinances, the participation is meaningful only if the church member senses a need for it and believes it is the right thing to do.

The basic requirements for receiving a patriarchal blessing are: 1) the person is a member of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and 2) the person is at least 16 years of age. A purpose of the blessing is to help the person see where they are and give guidance as to where they should be, and what they can become. The person should be concerned about their spiritual life, working toward becoming what they may understand the Lord is calling them to be.

Normally, the decision will be made about the readiness of the person to receive the blessing as the patriarch and the person meet in counseling session(s) well in advance of the actual giving of the blessing.

The personal preparation is a joint responsibility of both the one receiving the blessing and the patriarch giving the blessing. For the person receiving the blessing, this preparation should be in the form of study of the scriptures, fasting, prayer, reading the brochure Your Patriarchal Blessing, and looking at their life and relationship with Jesus. They should also ask themselves if they are ready to follow whatever direction and guidance God will give to them. This preparation time may be a few weeks or a few months in which the individual and the patriarch may meet two or three times. During these meetings, the patriarch will be able to answer questions about the blessing. He will encourage continued preparation and share some of the physical details and procedures.

The patriarch will be preparing himself with prayer, study, fasting, and seeking the mind and will of God for the person desiring to receive their patriarchal blessing. The patriarch seeks to live his life in such a way that he is very sensitive to the needs of the individual, as well as to the Spirit of God, enabling the patriarch to be a worthy instrument to express God's blessing to the person receiving it. We cannot overstate the importance of personal preparation before coming to the Lord to seek a patriarchal blessing.

Many are interested in receiving information about their lineage. The provision is made in latter day scripture that if the patriarch is so led by the Spirit, that lineage can be designated. (See **Doctrine and Covenants 125:3** and **R-157::4**) Many blessings do not indicate lineage. The important thing to remember is that one is in the family of Jesus Christ.

As you consider the need to receive your patriarchal blessing, you may want to talk with a priesthood member, other members of your branch or congregation who have received their blessing, your mother or father, or your

grandparents to hear their testimony of what their blessing has added to their life experience.

In summary, the patriarchal blessing may include the giving of comfort when needed, or admonition, and especially, good counsel as to a godly way of life, and to the rededication and reconsecration of one's life. It will bring blessings from above to help one in making adjustments to life and its problems. It is important to remember that, while the spirit of prophecy may be present during the blessing, it has more important functions than just predicting future events. This ordinance, coupled with faithful obedience to the will of God, brings divine blessings and guidance and help through an entire lifetime.

Through the years, as you and your circumstances change, your understanding of your blessing (gift) and its application in your life will also change. You should find new applications of the counsel given for your life's direction.

## **Scriptures for further study:**

### **Doctrine & Covenants**

Sections 4 and 86

### **Book of Mormon**

2 Nephi 13:27-32

Mosiah Chapters 1, 2 and 3

Moroni Chapter 10

### **Holy Scriptures – Inspired Version**

Matthew Chapters 5, 6 and 7

John Chapter 14

Romans Chapters 8 through 15

Hebrews Chapters 9 through 13