

*One
Heart
and
One
Mind*

*Study
Program*

This book, “*One Heart and One Mind*,” is the third study book that the Women’s Council have produced. With each publication, it has been the desire of the council that the women of the church will become stronger in their knowledge, determination, and vision of the kingdom as they study these books. This particular study book reminds us of the simple fact that God admonishes us to gather together often and become one in heart and mind. We are unable to do his will, witness to the world, and build the kingdom if we are not unified, and we can’t be unified if we don’t know each other. The lessons in this book guide us in ways to gather together, become one, and become unified. Zion cannot be fulfilled until we become obedient to the directions of the Lord, until we become the faithful families which Christ has called us to become.

As you study this book, it is the hope of the council that you will recognize the depth which the Lord’s hand had in the compiling of this work. Those who wrote the worship and study lessons did so without having each other’s materials to read first, and yet, when they turned in their articles, there were so many similar thoughts and expressions found throughout the writings. Where one author of a lesson left off, the next lesson’s author would continue on. The council hopes that you are as richly blessed in the studying of this book as we were in preparing it. May God bless us as we move closer to the establishment of Zion.

Women’s Council
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Worship Preferring Others

Scripture: Matthew 25:35-41

Hymn #355: “If Suddenly Upon the Street”

I think we can all relate to a time when we have had company over for a meal, or we were the invited guest. When I was a child, it was intimidating to have a “stranger” over. Mom and dad would ask me and my sister to be on our best behavior, use our manners, and be attentive to our guest. We would set the table with our nice silverware and plates. Our guest would be served first and offered second helpings before the others at the table. We would stay and talk over a nice meal and dessert. Towards the end of the meal, I didn’t feel like our guest was a “stranger” anymore. When the visit was over and our guest had gone home, I had the chance to reflect about the wonderful feeling of getting to know someone and knowing that they had a nice evening too. I’m hopeful you have had a similar experience and outcome.

Most of the time our guests are church members, people we work with, or our family members. Our circle is somewhat comfortable to us and we are able to relate in our conversations. I’d say we practice preferring others in our circle quite frequently. We uphold others in our prayers once we know of a need and then help where we can.

How often do we extend to our brothers and sisters in our community? Do we provide for the neighbor in need prior to our own needs? Preferring others is walking in the stead of Christ and having the attitude of love towards one another. We use our best behaviors that we learned from our scriptures and humbly serve our fellow men. Preferring others can be more than a monetary or goods donation and more than just a meal. A loving smile, positive conversation, and expressing empathy towards others is a start. The end of the verse of the hymn “If Suddenly Upon the Street” says: “My life could show some kindness done, some purpose formed, some work begun for his dear sake...love’s gift to lay at Jesus’ feet.” Preferring others takes an action from us. Consider making it a daily goal to find one way to extend God’s love to your fellow brothers and sisters. What is your gift that you will lay at Jesus’ feet?

Written by Christina Purvis

Study Guide

Preferring Others

“And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God. Behold, ye have called me your king; and if I, whom ye call your king, do labor to serve you, then had not ye ought to labor to serve one another?” (Mosiah 1:49-50).

One of my sisters (Clorece Eddingfield) taught me, through her actions many years ago, the joy that comes in serving others. I gave an offertory statement from the pulpit one Sunday morning and said, “We should give until it hurts, rather than hurt until we give.” After church that day, my sister smiled and said, “Brother, that was quite a statement that you made, but you got it wrong. We shouldn’t give until we hurt; we should give until we feel good.” That statement, said in private forty years ago, changed my life. King Benjamin helped the people understand the importance of serving one another because we are also serving God. Clorece was not one who told others what they needed to do. Instead, she set the example by how she lived her life. She was always drawn to the less fortunate children who had nothing. She gave of herself by teaching and physically giving help to others. She never had much financially, but she was always willing to give all she had. She lived the scripture found in Luke 3:15-16, ***“And the people asked him (John), saying, What***

shall we do then? He answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.”

Since Coral and I came into the Remnant Church in 2005 (the same month and year Clorece went to Paradise), we have found so many people similar to her, from the Lunch Partners and Clothes Closet staff to gifted people helping to build, remodel, and repair for others. Some willingly take care of the elderly, whether they invite the elderly to live with them, provide transportation to church, doctor appointments, grocery store, or other types of errands. Some clean houses for others who can't, while some mow lawns or call to check up on shut-ins. These are just a few of the things we have observed that others in our church do in the name of Jesus.

Can you image the love for others that the four sons of King Mosiah must have had when they went to their Nephite father to ask for permission to go an enemy country? Mosiah 12:1-3 states, ***“Now it came to pass that after the sons of Mosiah had done all these things, they took a small number with them, and returned to their father, the king, and desired of him that he would grant unto them, that they might, with those whom they had selected, go up to the land of Nephi, That they might preach the things which they had heard, and that they might impart the word of God to their brethren, the Lamanites, that perhaps they might bring them to the knowledge of the Lord their God, and convince***

them of the iniquity of their fathers; And that perhaps they might cure them of their hatred towards the Nephites, that they might also be brought to rejoice in the Lord their God.”

What happens when we don't obey by preferring others? We don't listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. We think how hard we worked for “our” money. Others got themselves into this mess, so why should we bother to help them out? We read in Zechariah that sin is the cause of all our troubles, even the sin of ignoring the needs of others. Zechariah 7:8-14 states, *“And the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother; And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his Spirit by the former prophets; therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts. Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts; But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned; for they laid the pleasant land desolate.”* Another example of this is in 1 John 2:9-11: *“He that saith he is in the light,*

and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.”

These, of course, are not a people that will build the kingdom of Zion! Continuing with that thought is 1 John 3:10-18: *“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of Christ, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue only; but in deed and in truth.”*

What attitude must we develop in our lives that allows us to prefer our sisters and brothers?

Should we have the attitude of humility, of love, of service, of generosity? How do we honor our brethren? How do we honor our God? Romans and the Doctrine & Covenants give us wonderful guidelines on how to honor God by doing for others. Romans 12:10-21 states, ***“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”***

Remnant Revelation 157:6a says, ***“Thus saith the Spirit to the church: You, my Remnant saints, must be a people who are armed with great humility and charity, that is, the pure love of mine only Begotten Son. You have not learned, sufficiently, to prefer your brothers and sisters in all things. Among my priesthood there still remains too***

much pride, contention, and self-interest. Purge yourselves of these evils. Contend not so much on the interpretation of my word, but reason together and let my Spirit direct you in all things to the end that your Father in heaven shall be glorified and my kingdom unfold before you.

Paul tells us in II Timothy 4:7, ***“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”*** That’s exactly how long we need to prefer others. We need to keep it up until the very end – not just once or twice. Have you ever been called at 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning to sit with someone at the hospital? Did you have to be called or did you leave your nice, warm bed and rush to the hospital because someone else told you that person was in the hospital? Or have you comforted a friend late at night when a family member had just died? These actions are not just limited to priesthood. Charity that was spoken of by the prophets is the pure love of Christ and endures forever. We find it stated in Moroni 7:50-53: ***“And if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity, he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity. And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the***

greatest of all, for all things must fail; but charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth for ever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with them. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son Jesus Christ, that ye may become the sons of God, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is, that we may have this hope, that we may be purified even as he is pure.”

Why should we prefer others? Because when done in the right spirit of mind, it feels good and we know that we’ve served our God. Matthew reminds us to always be doing for others. We should be preferring others constantly so when Christ asks us if we remember the time we did something in his name, we won’t be able to answer. Because we do so much for others, we will have to ask him to be more specific about which time he is talking about. This is shown in Matthew 25:35-41: *“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in; or naked, and clothed*

thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

The Doctrine & Covenants also gives us a reason to prefer others: It’s the Law. D&C 59:2: a-b: *“Wherefore I give unto them a commandment, saying thus: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”*

Scriptural References: Matthew 19:19, Matthew 22:35-39, II Thessalonians 3:13, Hebrews 13:2

Questions:

1. I’ve been offended by a certain person and they haven’t asked for my forgiveness or even apologized. I can’t get over the situation and I can’t do anything to help them anymore. Is this okay with God? (D&C 64:2c, d)
2. Doctrine & Covenants 64:2c,d doesn’t say that I sinned because I offended someone, so I’ll probably do it again. Is this okay with God? (Matthew 5:24-26)

3. I love you and I see you need some clothes or money or medicine or food and water. Why don't you check out food stamps at the welfare department or some other agency? Is this okay with God? (James 2:15-17 and Matthew 25:43-47)
4. Do we serve others as we should? Then why don't we have Zion? (Genesis 7:21-23)
5. How many ways can you think of to prefer others?

Written by Elbert Rogers

Worship Attendance

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:5-7

Hymn #32: “I Was Glad, and My Heart Did Rejoice”

Have you ever thought about what God desires our attendance to be as saints? Is attendance more than being physically present at a church service for that hour? Yes, it also requires us to have a mindset of, “I get to go to the House of the Lord” instead of “I’ve got to go to church”. Do you see the difference? Our attitude and preparedness play a big part of our attendance. When we have the desire to worship our Lord, we prepare ourselves to go to church, even in our busiest of schedules.

In the scripture from Deuteronomy, we are asked to show our love to God with everything we have and during all times of the day. Attendance shows our love towards God. When we *attend* to God throughout our day, and in attendance at worship services continually, then we will desire to worship him more frequently, individually, and collectively as saints.

In our household, my husband and I try to live a life that shows we love God and follow his commandments by example. A few weeks ago, our middle daughter, Adeline, who just turned two, showed us that the choices we make in worshipping God is apparent even to a toddler. It was Wednesday and we were getting ready to go to prayer service. I

was bundling up our baby and the rest of the family was getting their shoes on in the mudroom. About to leave and with my hand on the doorknob, suddenly, like a toddler, Adeline smiles and runs away to her bedroom. We all say ‘bye’ to Adeline and telling her we are leaving (in hopes she would come back on her own and we wouldn’t have to chase her or drag her to the car). In her own way of saying, “just a minute,” Adeline yells back, busies herself in the bedroom, and then runs back to us. I’m relieved that I don’t have to chase her! We noticed that Adeline has something in her hands, so we ask her what she brought with her. Very proudly, and with a big smile, Adeline holds up her child’s Bible that has a picture of Jesus on the front cover. Even as a toddler, Adeline knew that going to church meant gathering together to worship him, an act of love. This also prompted our oldest daughter, Lydia, to grab her Bible.

If we choose a life where we are dedicated to meet God in our daily activities and worship settings, others will notice as well. Let our attitudes be one that is honorable and purposeful towards God. Is your attitude today an “I get to” or an “I’ve got to” one?

Written by Christina Purvis

Study Guide

Attendance

Attendance is a term we are all familiar with from having attended school. Good attendance is stressed by teachers and should be by parents. Good attendance results in the best possible ADA (average daily attendance) for school districts. Budget income is based upon ADA. The ultimate goal for good attendance, however, is learning. If a student is absent, the day's curricular content is missed. The sequence of study is interrupted, and the acquisition of knowledge is delayed and often neglected. The necessity for re-teaching or making up lesson content by several absentees can challenge the best of instructors. Absenteeism creates problems for student and teacher alike.

Attendance in school, although a requirement, should be anticipated with a desire to be there to learn and to associate with one's peers. One fifth grade student from my experience as a principal was an exception. His teacher approached me with concern. Frankie was frequently absent, did no homework, and did not pay attention in class. I asked to speak with Frankie. When asked why he wasn't interested in school, his response was this: "I don't need to learn any of these subjects because I am going to live alone in the wilderness, build my own house, and live off the land." An idea was born! I called the teacher of a high school vocational education class of students building a house in the community. I requested that he take Frankie for a day

and, without informing Frankie of his intentions, have his instruction include the necessity for spelling, reading, math, science, etc., and working with others toward a common goal. With Frankie's mother's permission this was accomplished. The day after his return, Frankie came into my office and reported, "I get it!" His attendance improved, he began doing homework, and he became an involved and interested student.

We can all come up with reasons for not attending a church service. To name a few of mine from my teenage years: I wanted to sleep in. I didn't enjoy the fifty-mile drive (one way) to church. I was bored by the preacher. There were other activities I would prefer doing that day. But my father would have no excuse! He often played a song (Brighten the Corner Where You Are sung by the Mills Brothers) that I disliked in order to get me up to turn it off. I told him that one of our priesthood members was slow of speech and so soft spoken that I just couldn't pay attention to him. Although he was a brilliant scientist, his public speaking ability was lacking. My father reminded me that he was an ordained minister and to try listening to the content of his sermon. I might learn something. He was right.

There have been two other occasions when I couldn't attend church on a regular basis. One was from about 1985 to 1999 (fourteen years). After the changes in the RLDS church, my small congregation in California split. Those remaining in the conservative portion, and not accepting the theological changes, met in my home for about a year until almost all those members gathered to the Center

Place. There was no congregation within hundreds of miles from my home. The only contact I had during the ensuing years was via letters, tapes, and books sent by friends living here. In 1999 I retired and moved to Independence.

The second occasion was from 2009 through 2016 (seven years). My health had deteriorated to the point where I was confined to my home. During those years I continued to be a proofreader for *The Hastening Times*. Three members of my congregation kept in touch with me from time to time. I had no other contact with church members. Some told me later that they thought I had moved away. After having three major surgeries and experiencing many improvements in my health, I returned to church in 2017.

You might wonder why I shared these periods of absence with you. Even though my faith never wavered, I missed the fellowship with others of like beliefs. I missed the instruction given during classes, sermons, conferences, and reunions. The acquisition of knowledge, the strengthening of faith, and the opportunity to serve suffered. Now I feel very fortunate to be able to take every opportunity to attend, learn, and serve.

Why should we attend church? Do we go with anticipation, preparation, and the desire to worship our Heavenly Father? Or do we go because it is a habit, a chance to see friends and family, or half-heartedly go just to be able to claim we are Christians? Are we Christmas and Easter Christians? Do we just attend a minimum of meetings rather than

take advantage of every opportunity to be in attendance? What are we missing if the latter is true?

We were directed *to “Read, study and obey!”* Some of this may be accomplished at the family altar, but much broader understanding and commitment may be attained within the body of Christ and association one with another. Consecration of time, talents, and temporalities also may be more fully realized within the church as a whole. We are admonished to come out of Babylon. What better place to find solace and peace than within the church? Children are to be taught. That burden does not have to rest with the parents alone. Inclusion in church activities and classes reinforce the tenets of the gospel. We are to be attuned to hear the Lord. Will we be present when he speaks?

Now let’s look at reasons to attend from the scriptures:

1Timothy 4:13 – *“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”*

This message from Paul was to the priesthood. Don’t we need to be present to learn from the men of the priesthood?

Alma 16:228 – *“For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God: yea, behold, the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors.”*

This message was from Amulek to the Zoramites. How can we prepare to meet God if we do not take every opportunity to learn, apply, and grow in the knowledge of the gospel?

III Nephi 8:53 – *“And behold, ye shall meet together oft...”*.

This is directly from Jesus! Should we disregard this direction from our Lord?

Moroni 6:6 – *“And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls: and they did meet together oft to partake of bread and wine, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus.”*

Moroni wrote about the functions of the church, the ordinances and the priesthood. Why should current church members not comply with the admonition to meet oft?

Other pertinent scriptures include: IV Nephi 1:13, III Nephi 5:115, Matthew 18:20, D&C 6:15b

Remnant Revelations that relate to attendance and how it can strengthen individuals and the church include:

Remnant Revelation 145:7a – *“The Spirit says further: Continue, my faithful Remnant, in the spirit of unity, to strengthen your faith, to spread the love of Christ to a sin-sick world, to study to understand the fullness of my Gospel, and if you do, you will be blessed beyond measure.”*

Remnant Revelation 146:5a – *“I have given into your hands that property known as the “Gathering Place.” It has come to pass, not only by much sacrifice and zeal of you my people, but by my*

design. Assemble and worship in that place often and I will be in your midst.”

Remnant Revelation 147:6b – *“Continue to be faithful, humble, and unified in your worship and service to me and, as promised earlier, my Zion will unfold before you. Thus saith the Spirit. Amen.”*

Remnant Revelation 150:8a – *“I wait to endow you with greater understanding and power, my Remnant flock, but too many of you are enmeshed in the things of this world. You must find you way out of Babylon. Greater sacrifice and discipline than you have known before will be required for the work that truly lies ahead.”*

Remnant Revelation 157:5a-c – This message is for the women of the church. Please review the contents.

Remnant Revelation 162:5 – *“Remember, remember, my Remnant saints, you are of the chosen few to bring to pass my kingdom in these last days. To whom much is given, much is required. Throughout the revelatory direction given to the Remnant Church from the prophetic office is that which is required for bringing to pass my Zion, and therefore my coming. Read, study, and obey!”*

Remnant Revelation 163:5b – This message is for the senior citizens to assist the youth in their challenges.

Remnant Revelation 164:4b – “Continue my saints to gather in fellowship, study and worship, and in your unity, you will find strength to do all things. I, the Lord, will always be with you to guide and direct your paths, even unto my coming with the kingdom of Heaven.”

Attendance at church includes Sunday early family worship when thoughtful lessons are presented by members, Sunday school classes for instruction in doctrine, and Sunday preaching services that permit us to learn from the various priesthood members. Prayer meetings bring us the opportunity to pray and testify and bring us closer to one another and to our Lord. Camps, reunions, retreats, vacation church school, and women’s and priesthood meetings provide unique opportunities for growth and fellowship. Attendance at conference is critical to the governance of the church and provides the opportunity to fellowship with members from all congregations.

Here is an intriguing report about church attendance: In a recent AARP Bulletin, there was an article titled, “99 Ways to Add Healthy Years to Your Life.” Number ninety-nine read as follows: “Pray for Longer Life – A 2016 study followed 74,534 women for twenty years. Those who attended religious services more than once a week enjoyed a thirty-three percent lower mortality rate than those who skipped church.” I thought this should have been number one, not number ninety-nine!

The following vocabulary list came to mind while preparing this article. Define each one and share how it relates to this topic of attendance.

Commitment

Worship

Example

Distractions

Absent

Learn

Apply

Comply

Prepare

Faith

Questions:

1. What can you do to improve your attendance and strengthen your fellowship within the church?
2. Why is learning about the gospel important for adults when considering the youth of the church?
3. What benefits can we derive from fellowship with one another?
4. What are your goals for reading, studying and obeying?
5. How may we demonstrate “coming out of Babylon?”

Written by Carol Starks

Worship

Support the Priesthood

Scripture: Doctrine & Covenants 140:1b

Hymn: #308 “Thank You for the Holy Ordinance”

Supporting all of our priesthood is of vital importance if the church is to stay on track and to grow. How do we do this? It is so very important to keep each and every member of the priesthood in our thoughts and prayers each and every day. They have responsibilities each day that we may not know of. They are called out to administer, they are called on to teach, they are called out to visit, they need to prepare for a service, attend meetings, etc. And in doing all these things, it takes time away from their families and other responsibilities that they have.

I am a convert to the Restoration so it was new to me to have “volunteer” priesthood. I know they are more than volunteers as they are called from God, but they do the work without compensation. So many of them go to work to support their families and then on the weekends and in the evenings do the church work. In most churches, the pastor is paid and therefore does a lot of his work during working hours, and perhaps limited time is spent after hours. This is a lot of responsibility for these men. My thought when I first knew of this was, “Wow, why would anybody want to do that?” It was exciting to me that these special men take the time to do God’s

work. I have come to really appreciate the time that these men spend in church work.

Prayer is the number one thing that we can do for our priesthood. Prayer will guide them and sustain them and help them know what is needed.

Besides prayer, there are still many things that we can do. By attending services, we support them in their efforts. What good does it do to prepare a class or a sermon and then no one is in attendance. How disappointing to them that there is no one there to hear what God has laid on their hearts to help the people. By supporting these activities, aren't there blessings that also come back to us for attending and hearing these things? We will gain so much by attending church supported activities. We will be blessed by what we hear and participate in and the priesthood will be blessed by preparing these activities. How will we support our priesthood this year?

Written by Jolene Webb

Study Guide

Support the Priesthood

Colossians 1:3 *“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.”*

The first thing most of us think about when we talk about supporting our priesthood is through our prayers. We are asked from the pulpit to support our speaker: it is on our prayer chains, and some of us have priesthood in our homes, which we support by prayer. This is definitely the way we must support our priesthood, and we need to pray for each priesthood member that has any responsibility in the service.

We all make decisions based on our life experiences. My life experiences have been as a coach for team and individual sports which brings to mind these points. We need to promote the best in our teammates, the priesthood. As a member of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, we are a team. We may not be on the front line but, nevertheless, we are a member of the team and should be good team mates to our brothers who carry the responsibilities for the team. We do pray for our team leaders of the church as a whole and the branch leaders and each priesthood member when they are called on to take on responsibilities, whether it is for a year or just one service. We pray for our leaders of the Remnant Church that God’s Spirit would be with them, that they would receive enlightenment and wisdom and that they would be in

tune with the Spirit and help us move forward towards building the kingdom. In our branch and in our homes, we pray for the priesthood.

Remnant Revelation 154:4b it states, ***“For as surely as you understand time, time shall come to an end, and it is for you to speedily be about building my earthly kingdom. To this end you must continue to make preparation. To escape the coming economic calamity, free yourselves of monetary debt. To withstand the approaching collapse of moral and family values around you, established family altars must be in place. Even though you may have to pass through many trials in these last days, be strong and be cheerful, for in my gospel and in my word you shall find strength to overcome. Seek me in your quiet places and you shall have peace in your souls.”***

However, there are other ways that we can and should support our priesthood. After thinking about this subject, and interviewing a few women who have priesthood husbands and sons in their home, as well as a few priesthood members themselves, I would like to present several additional ways that we can support our priesthood.

As wives and mothers, we need to prepare our homes for spiritual peace. We need to follow the admonition in Remnant Revelation 154:4b. We need to convey a positive attitude and not a negative condition for priesthood in the home. When they have an assignment, of course we will have special prayer and fasting for them and are careful not to bring any discourse from outside sources into our home. We need to be good listeners and have

empathy for their thoughts and desires. We need to lighten their burdens so their thoughts will be peaceful and spiritually reflective. We can encourage them with positive input. In some cases, we can suggest ideas if they ask for our thoughts. For example, “What do you think this scripture means?” or “Have you ever thought about this?” We do not need to lead or dictate how they should study or prepare their final product or push our ideas upon an unreceptive priesthood member.

Remnant Revelation 157:6b states, ***“Thus saith the Spirit to the Church, ‘The letter of the law killeth, but the Spirit gives life.’”*** In Doctrine & Covenants 63:16a we read, ***“Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit, and in this there is no condemnation; and ye receive the Spirit through prayer; wherefore, without this there remaineth condemnation.”***

We especially need to encourage our new priesthood members with positive support. We need to be careful how we greet them at the end of the service, always with a positive comment and not a negative one. We need to hold our constructive criticism for a later time when they are away from the moment. If you can deliver constructive criticism positively at another time when it comes up, it would be received better. Positive encouragement gets the best results. As a coach, I learned that you don’t tear them down after a hard-fought loss, you need to express a positive outlook for their future growth to help build them up.

In my present career in working in the Bishop's office, I have learned these things in supporting the priesthood. Start the day with prayer that all who we come in contact with will be blessed and feel a supportive helpful spirit. When one or more of the bishops are involved in a stressful situation during the day, to support them, I pray for guidance and direction for them during their meeting, that the Lord will bless their situation with wisdom and peace. Being a good listener during some of these stressful situations is the best thing that one can do. Remember not to give advice at this time, and always keep the conversation confidential.

Some priesthood members feel that the best support that they could get is patience with them, as they struggle to meet their responsibilities for building the kingdom and being a productive member in their family. Also, having scriptural study and spiritual discussion as a family is a support that most priesthood feel would grow the family and boost their spirituality. We also can support the priesthood by remembering their family's needs when that priesthood member is away from home. We could help them with projects, or by doing something special with their wives and children, or helping them in other supportive ways.

As good team members who support our priesthood, we need to be spiritually prepared for each service. We need to carry that spiritual countenance with us after reading, studying, and obeying the scriptures. We need to be prepared to participate in each service and support our priesthood

by being good listeners, good prayer warriors, and good testifiers.

Remnant Revelation 157:5a we read, *“To my handmaidens, yea even you daughters of Zion: Even though you are not permitted the authority and role of priesthood, you are of equal worth in fulfilling the work of bringing forth my kingdom on earth in these last days. Exercise your many gifts and talents, not just in your daily walk, but in those special ministries of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and preparing for troubled times. Your labors of righteousness and your sacrifices are truly a blessing to me and bring honor and glory to your heavenly Father. Continue to seek out those avenues of opportunity to serve me in those ways that are granted to you, my handmaidens.”*

Questions:

1. What have been some of your experiences when you have supported the priesthood?
2. How do you prepare yourselves so that you can support the priesthood for each service?
3. How do you support the new priesthood members?
4. What do you think your responsibility is for a priesthood visit in your home?

Written by Geraldine Madden

Worship

Gather with Our Sisters

Scripture: Matthew 18:20

Hymn: #516 “Where Two or Three”

Thirty years ago, I was part of a “gathering of sisters” that touched my heart so deeply that I will always remember it. I was married with two small children. I had just finished my last round of chemotherapy for breast cancer. I had made it to the finish line. I had completed those necessary, but terrible treatments. I remember feeling relieved, but at the same time feeling like I had been run over by a semitruck. I had no energy or strength. Nothing tasted good and I wondered if I would ever feel normal again. Little did I know how much my church sisters were going to help lift my spirits. Two of those sisters had gotten together and decided to plan a surprise party for me in celebration of being done with treatments. One sister planned the party. She reserved a room at a local restaurant, invited the sisters, and got the decorations. The other sister made arrangements with my husband to find the best time to have the party and how to get me to the restaurant without me suspecting anything. They were successful. I walked into a room full of balloons and cheers instead of a quiet family dinner that I thought was going to happen. Being surrounded by my sisters that night renewed my strength. Their laughter and kindness seemed to transform even my body. Food

tasted good, I was able to eat it without difficulty, and I wasn't tired. Their love gave me courage and hope that I had beaten the cancer.

I know this is an unusual example of "gather with our sisters" in some ways, but it is also the perfect example. When we gather together, we give each other strength, help, courage, joy, and love. Whether our gatherings are surprise parties, or study classes, or movie nights, or gathering to bake bread, the reason is not important - the gathering is. We have a great resource in our fellow sisters and we need to use it. We need to teach each other, help each other, even carry each other, as my sisters did for me. Sisters, let us develop the habit of gathering together often, and to those sisters so long ago that had a very special gathering for me, thank you again.

Written by Marci Damon

Study Guide

Gather with Our Sisters

I would like to take a moment and share a testimony. The Women's Council did a lot of praying and thinking about the topics that should be presented in this study book. We felt led by the gentle Spirit as we selected these topics. Our goal was to help the sisters see the importance of drawing together, thus grow closer to each other, closer to God, and better able to do his will of building Zion. It was by luck of the draw that I received the responsibility to write the worship on "Gather with Our Sisters." As I wrote that worship segment, to my surprise the memory of it came very quickly. I had not thought about that special gathering of sisters in years, but the emotions of love and gratitude, the same that I felt that night, washed over me again as I wrote it. I have often wondered why I had been blessed with that experience.

Just a few days ago it became evident. Situations arose, beyond anyone's control, and a new writer was needed for this lesson. I was the one to whom fell the responsibility to write the lesson. I began praying and thinking about what I should write, trying to think of words of wisdom to present. Again, the recognition of how special it is to gather with the sisters came to me. If you get nothing more than this from the lesson, please get this: it is crucial to gather often with our sisters.

The scriptures are full of the times that the Lord has instructed his people to gather together. In

Zechariah 8:7-8 we read, ***“I will gather my people from the east country, and from the west country...and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.”*** Mosiah 9:58 states, ***“And there was one day in every week that was set apart that they should gather themselves together to teach the people, and worship the Lord their God, and also as often as it was in their power, to assemble themselves together.”*** ***“Nevertheless the children of God were commanded that they should gather themselves together oft”*** is found in Alma 4:6. In Doctrine and Covenants 6:15b, we read, ***“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, as touching one thing, behold, there will I be in the midst of them; even so am I in the midst of you.”*** We find in these scriptures different reasons for gathering as well as what will happen when we do gather. Coming together, for whatever reason, is important to God. We do not live in a vacuum, and we are unable to do the work that God wants us to do when in such a vacuum. We are counseled to always be together.

I think we would all agree that it is important to attend church activities as has already been mentioned in a previous lesson. However, there is something special about gathering together with the sisters. I was not blessed with having a sister; instead, I was blessed with a younger brother. I remember growing up and thinking at times how nice it would be to have a sister instead of a brother, especially when he kept taking the heads off my Barbie dolls. As a girl I longed to have someone that I could talk to, someone that would have my similar point of

view, that would know and understand me as only a sister could. I discovered, as a young adult, that I did have a sister, several in fact, in the sisters of the church. There is a special bond among the sisters of the church that we need to grow and develop, for everyone's well-being.

As sisters we share each other's hope, joy, concern, burdens, wisdom, and so on. How many of us, after receiving a report of good news, and after sharing it with our family, want to share it with a sister? How many of us, after becoming frustrated over a situation, call a sister asking for help? How many of us have called a sister and asked for her to pray for us or for a concern that we have? There is a bond in our sisterhood that provides great strength and help, and we need to develop that bond.

How can we develop that bond if we don't know each other? When was the last time that we heard of a sister who had come home from the hospital, but we didn't even know she was sick and in the hospital to begin with? Or how many of us, after the fact, learned of a need of a sister, that we could have provided but we didn't know about it? How can we help each other if we don't know each other? It is through interactions with our sisters that we are able to share. We learn how to share our burdens, as well as help carry other's burdens. We are able to share wisdom, things that we have learned in the scriptures, vocation, and life. We are able to enrich our prayer life as our prayers expand to include our sisters around us. Hopefully, you are beginning to recognize the value of getting to know each other.

One of the best ways to get to know each other, is to spend time with each other. While we get to know each other at church, we need other opportunities of fellowship in order to develop those sisterly relationships. We need to gather together often in order to develop those bonds of love and trust. This will mean planning, implementing, and follow-through. We need to be consistent and constant in our relationships with each other.

The first step that is needed is for someone to step forward in order to initiate and oversee gatherings of the sisters. Next, plan how often you will be getting together and what type of activities will be done. Finally, gather together for fellowship, learning, and sharing. How often you meet together may depend on how close the sisters are located to each other. For you sisters who are in branches, hopefully you would be able to meet monthly, or perhaps more times. For those sisters who live farther away from each other, the gatherings may need to be at reunions, conferences, and retreats. However, that doesn't mean that you can't gather more frequently by using the phone, email, Facetime, and letters. These gatherings may have many different purposes such as to learn, to share, to serve, to have fun, but the goal of all these gatherings is to get to know your sisters and become closer together.

Here are just a few ideas of activities that can be done as you gather with your sisters. Do craft projects. Teach each other how to sew, crochet, knit, paint, cross-stitch, etc. Have food projects. Learn how to bake breads or can foods. Are we going to lose some much-needed knowledge in our church

because we are not sharing with each other what we know? We are to be good stewards of our bodies so perhaps you can join together to exercise or walk. How much easier is it to be physically active, like we need to be, when we are doing it with our sisters? Plan study or service projects. Is there a sister in the scriptures that you want to learn more about? Does an elderly saint need help cleaning her home? Does a young mother need a break from the children so she can have a rest? There are many possibilities. And of course, gathering together to share in a meal and fellowship is always a good activity. Be creative and gather together often.

The Lord created us to be social creatures, not to live and exist alone. He has also said that where two or three are gathered, focused on one thing, he will be in their midst. In order to build Zion, we need to become one and we can't be one with each other if we don't know each other. The amazing thing is, when we draw together to share, we gain strength, joy, hope, and love. We become so blessed when we follow the Lord's admonition to gather together often. Sisters, let us gather together, hand in hand, to help each other on this path to the kingdom.

Questions:

1. What testimonies or experiences have you had when you gathered with your sisters?
2. What gatherings will your branch or group plan in the coming year?

3. What obstacles do you have to overcome to follow through with the gatherings?
4. What blessings do you hope to receive from these gatherings?

Written by Marci Damon

Worship

Develop Hospitality

Scripture: Hebrews 13:2

Hymn: #426 “Take My Life and Let It Be”

When I was a young girl, I remember Grandma talking about her relationship she had with her neighbors. She enjoyed going around to see and talk with everyone, as well as having them in her home for meals and also sharing the surplus of her garden with them. In fact, she had Grandpa put a gate in their backyard fence. This way she could just walk through her backyard, into her neighbor’s backyard, and up to the back door for a visit. Otherwise, Grandma had to walk out the front door, around the corner, and two houses down for her visit, twice as far. Grandma knew everyone in her neighborhood and what was going on with them. I am ashamed to admit that I lived for twenty years in the same neighborhood but knew only three or four people, and really only knew one family well.

Hospitality has been an area I have had to work on over the years, and am still working on. It is easier to use the excuse that I am too busy to visit or that my house needs to look perfect, instead of inviting people over. I have learned that being friendly and welcoming doesn’t need planning and perfection as much as a willingness to do it. My worst nightmare happened a couple of years ago when I invited some church friends over for lunch on

Sunday. I had everything planned. The house was cleaned, the table was set, and dinner was in the oven with the timer set. I was ready for our company. However, when I got home my perfectly planned meal was a shamble. Something had happened to the oven and nothing was cooked. Everyone was supposed to be there in less than thirty minutes and I had no dinner to feed them. We came up with plan B and got some carry out food. The meal and fellowship were good, even if it wasn't what I had planned. We also had a good laugh when I said what had happened, and that we would be eating roast for the rest of the week! I realized that perfection and planning are not the important part of hospitality, it is the willingness to share. Share our time, share friendship, share warmth and kindness, share our love. Who knows, just as the scripture above says, one of these times of showing forth kindness and inviting someone into our home, we may be inviting an angel in.

Written by Marci Damon

Study Guide

Develop Hospitality

When I looked for a definition of hospitality, it referred mostly to the hotel and restaurant business. It is often defined as the quality or disposition of receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, generous manner. What's missing in the dictionary definition is the feeling. Hospitality is not what you DO. It is the nature of your thinking when you interact with people. Hospitality may not be easy to define, but we know it when we FEEL it. People need to be nurtured and not just fed. Lack of hospitality is like a relationship without love and passion. You cannot fake love, you cannot pretend hospitality....everyone recognizes a lack of genuine caring.

It is the “spirit of hospitality” that we all must exhibit towards our fellow mankind. Being kind, generous, and friendly to visitors, guests, and each other. It is the responsibility of all Christians to greet others graciously.

The **gift** of hospitality is the ability to **enjoy** meeting new people and providing a warm welcome, food, friendship, or shelter. Not everyone is blessed with this gift any more than everyone is blessed with the gift of preaching, teaching, praying, etc. People with this gift can create a warm, welcoming environment, meet new people and help them feel welcome, provide a safe and comfortable setting where relationships can be built, connect people together, and set people at ease. We can all benefit

from exercising these qualities of showing love by welcoming others into our personal space, share what we have, being a companion, with our conversation, sharing our circle of friends, our fellowship, our faith.

Paul, in Romans 12:13, specifies in his listing of Christian virtues to be “given to hospitality.” In Hebrews 13:2, we are admonished to ***“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”***

In previous Women’s Council study guides, there have been chapter discussions on nurturing and service opportunities and abounding in good works. These are all topics that inspire our personal growth and development. This in turn helps us to learn to shower love and attention on our guests and not just offer food or lodging. It is our goal to make people welcome and to feel at home. The spirit of hospitality will create in us an earnest desire that we may be able to give some blessing and help to others on their earthly pilgrimage.

The story of the Good Samaritan as found in Luke 10:31-38, stands as an example of Christian hospitality. Genesis 18:1-14 tells of the account of Abraham entertaining the three angels and shows how a person should treat others.

At our congregation there are several ways of showing our nurturing hospitality. In addition to the deacons, we have a “greeter” who waits until a short time after the service begins in the foyer to make sure that everyone is made to feel welcome. The women also have an opportunity to meet once a month at a local restaurant for lunch. This is a time

to catch up and get acquainted with those whom we worship with and may not know on an individual basis. Over the years there have been visiting teams organized that have functioned well. Two of our women have organized and lead a prayer and study group once a week. When we are open to sharing our time and self, we can connect with others in a way that goes beyond Sunday morning. Lunch after services on Sunday is often a wonderful time to invite people out to eat at a restaurant or to our home.

Sometimes it doesn't seem to be "convenient" to have guests and visitors in our homes. I am reminded that time is not promised and waits for no one. Am I going to wait so long that I am no longer able to be a good hostess or the guests will be unable to get out? My dad was always a huge sports fan. When we moved to the Kansas City area, we wanted to take him to a Royals baseball game. There always seemed to be an excuse for that not happening until I finally bought my parents plane and baseball tickets. We all enjoyed it thoroughly....even running through the rain at the end of the game. My dad passed away three months later, but I still have the vision of us laughing and enjoying a baseball game. What if we had continued to delay that event instead of marking it off our "bucket list." We need to be grateful, not regretful, for the time we can manage to get together and make memories with our family and friends.

I have also known families who opened their homes or extra living space to those who needed temporary housing until they could manage better. What a testimony of true hospitality.

The hospitality of the widow was put to the test very sorely when Elijah told her to first bake him a cake out of her last scanty handful of meal upon which the lives of her son and herself were depending. Her compliance in faith with this request brought a reward beyond her dreams (1 Kings 17:8-16). The spirit of hospitality in our hearts, in seeking to give freely of our love and service, will most surely receive generous recompense from the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

This spirit of hospitality, this outpouring of love for mankind must be nurtured within our families, within our homes, within our church families, and consequently spill over into our church ministry. Our church hospitality ministry could be structured like this:

- Pray that our church will be welcoming of visitors.

- Make conscience efforts to become acquainted with the members of the congregation.

- Learn to think like and have empathy for a visitor.

- Greet people as they enter, during the worship service, and after the service is over.

- Plan a visitor reception. It has been said that the ten most important minutes to a visitor to evaluate the friendliness of your

congregation are the first ten minutes after the service is over.

-Improve the facility. Look through the building as with the eyes of a visitor and see what needs to be “cleaned up” or improved to make a better impression.

-Is there someone who gets contact information for first-time visitors?

-Is your child care area or children’s ministry evident to those with children?

-Train volunteers to be responsive to the hospitality ministry.

Expressing the spirit of hospitality is a gift and if we go where our gifts are we will find God.

Scripture References: Matthew 10:35-38; Matthew 25:35-47; Acts 16:14-15; I Peter 4:9

Questions:

1. How do you develop a spirit of hospitality?
2. Is everyone naturally blessed with the ability to be hospitable?

3. What would improve your church groups' hospitality ministry?

4. When is a good time to start a hospitality church ministry?

5. Add to this list some personal traits of a hospitable person?
(caring, friendly, sincere, outgoing, sensitive, peacemaker, trustworthy, inviting)

Written by Beckie Hogan

Worship

Give of our Treasures

Scripture: Mosiah 2:43-44, Proverbs 3:27-28

Hymn: #430 “Give Me Thy Heart”

I learned the hard way how very important it is to keep track of our treasures and make an accounting so that we know the treasures we have and what we are doing with them.

When we had small children, my husband and I both worked and my husband was a teacher and a coach and spent many hours at the school. Because of this, our children and I also went to almost all of the school activities and this kept us very busy. We lived from paycheck to paycheck and just tried to make things work financially. We were then hurt with a child that had several open-heart surgeries and a house that burnt in the timeframe of just a few years. Money became very tight. We didn't feel like we ever had enough, and we certainly did not think we did much extra.

We decided that we needed to keep a better accounting of our financial situation. Wow, were our eyes opened to actually how much money we wasted. We started to realize how much money was spent on pop, on eating on the run, and many other things. As we started keeping track of these things, we made corrections, and as we did this, we actually found that we had more money. We are told to keep a financial accounting and I am here to say, this is very

important and eye opening. It can change our lives. By doing this, we can then give to those in need.

Besides financial, we have other treasures as well. I think of treasures as our talents. I have always felt blessed but did not feel I had any real talents. We have a small congregation and we had one piano player. When we found out that this person would be moving out of our area, it became apparent that we needed to find someone who could play the piano. I had taken one year of piano lessons when I was in the 5th grade and had always enjoyed it. My parent's house burnt down and I did not ever get another piano so my lessons stopped. I decided that I could try to play at least one handed just to give us something to sing to. I got a free piano from someone who I worked with that wanted to get rid of it. I brought it home and started working on playing different hymns. I have practiced very hard and have become adequate in playing at our church services. Luckily, we have a non-member lady that attends our congregation that can also play the piano so I do not have to play every Sunday. Through this, I found that I did have a talent and it just needed a little development. The congregation needed a piano player and I was willing to try and the Lord has greatly blessed me in this endeavor. I enjoy sitting down and playing. All of us have talents, sometimes we just need to look for them and then be ready to develop them when the opportunity arises. Sometimes, this requires us to get out of our comfort zone to develop our talents.

We all have so many treasurers such as family, friends, jobs, etc. We need to share these

treasures with others whether financially or in other ways such as sharing a talent we have. By giving of our treasures, we help others and we receive blessings far beyond what is expected. How will you share your treasures this year?

Written by Jolene Webb

Study Guide

Give of Our Treasures

“...remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Acts 20:35

Many of the references to treasure in the scriptures are about laying up treasure in heaven, which the Book of Mormon tells us is our good (or holy) works. But we are also stewards of the 'treasure' God has entrusted us with on earth. All of us have finances, to some degree, for which we are responsible. There are various ways of keeping an accounting of our money. The church provides a budget book, some use a notebook, and others keep a spreadsheet on the computer. But we are all required to make an accounting before God. When I first began to keep a budget book, I saved my receipts for months before writing them in the book. That meant I had to sort them all by date before entering them. What a chore. I remember it took me all day, once, to get my book caught up at the end of the year. Whether done daily or periodically through the month, I found out the hard way it is much easier to keep caught up.

I heard it said by a Christian financial counselor that there are more verses relating to money in the Bible than any other subject. We also have been given specific direction in the Doctrine and Covenants. Section 106 tells us the first step is consecration. As we go through the consecration process, we will find that some have surplus and

some do not. It is a very fair and equable process. After we consecrate our surplus (if we have any) then begins the tithing process. All are required to fill out a tithing statement. This is a God-given law and D&C 106:2b-c says, “... *If my people observe not this law, to keep it holy, ...it shall not be a land of Zion unto you ...*”.

While tithing supports the general church, our local offerings are necessary to keep our congregations operating and oblation is how we help the poor and needy. When I was undergoing treatment for cancer, and again, when I had a hip replacement and was unable to work, I was very grateful for the help I received from the oblation fund. The surplus funds we put into the storehouse help provide inheritances. This is God's plan for his people to have all things common.

By keeping an accounting, we are aware of where our money goes. Is our money being spent on 'just wants' or is it just a 'want'? Are there ways we can adjust our spending so we can give more to the Lord? As our hymn says, “We give thee but thine own.” Everything we have is from God. If we are only stewards, we will have to give an accounting to him one day for how we've used the resources he's given us. Luke 6:38 says, “*Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over...For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.*” Our security isn't in our savings, but in our giving. God loves a cheerful giver, not only of our money but of ourselves.

Besides our finances, we have other treasure

we can give. Brother Carl VunCannon brought an inspired message to our Sunday school class at Blue Springs. In it the Lord said, "If you love me you will devote all your time, talents, and resources to the building of my kingdom on earth." We've discussed our financial resources. Now let's consider our other treasures.

One of our greatest treasures is time. We have been given a time of probation on earth to prepare to meet God. Part of our consecration is that of our time. Sometimes time seems in short supply. Many responsibilities crowd our day, such as parenting, grandparenting, working outside the home or caring for aging parents. But God said we should give of our time to the building of his kingdom. First and foremost, we should find time each day for study. This should be a priority. So, what are some ways to give time? We can teach a Sunday school class, write a devotion, share church responsibilities, be on a cleaning crew or a calling committee. Those who are shut-ins or are in nursing homes cherish a visit. Those who are not as active physically anymore can devote time to being a prayer warrior. The priesthood, our youth, the leadership, and our church families all need prayer for wisdom and spiritual growth, etc. Just as our finances are divided into necessary expenses and expenditures from our increase, so should we budget our time so that, after our necessary responsibilities, we have time to give to furthering God's kingdom. What we do in service to others is considered a service to God.

We also have the treasure of talents. All of us appreciate the gifts of music, both vocal and

instrumental, that are shared in our church services. I believe our Lord enjoys our gifts of music, too. Whether it is through sharing in the ministry of music, or singing a heartfelt hymn, we can all give in this way. The talent of writing has many opportunities of service such as the *Hastening Times*, *Moments with the Master*, or sending cards and notes. Don't we all enjoy getting a personal card in the mail? Sharing the talent of cooking and baking is of great worth at many church functions. These are just a few ideas. God has given each of us a talent he expects us to develop and use for the building of his kingdom.

Our homes are a treasure we can share. There are many ways the saints have shared their homes. We can open our homes to visiting ministers, or to friends during conference. Not all of us are equipped to invite a family to dinner, but it is enjoyable to have a friend or two over for a casual visit. Don't you feel like you know someone better after you've spent time in their home? We have been told to love one another. This begins by getting to know one another.

Our Lord has told us how we can show our love for him: by devoting our time, talents, and resources – our treasures – to the building of his kingdom on earth. Remember, the only thing we can take with us is what we've given away.

Questions

1. What method do you choose to keep an accounting of your finances?

2. Have you been through the consecration process? Do you have a testimony from that experience?
3. How might you give more of your time to the Lord's work?
4. What talents can you share?
5. Have you invited anyone into your home recently? Can you think of someone you would enjoy sharing time with?
6. Have you visited a shut-in lately? Can you think of someone who would enjoy a visit from you?

Written by Rae Simmons

Worship Increasing Our Faith

Scripture: Matthew 21:20

Hymn: #384 “We Are Called to Be God’s People”

In my youth, I struggled with knowing what I should “grow up” to become. I knew I wanted to be helpful and serve God’s purposes, but I wasn’t sure in what way. I found joy in playing the piano for him and gained many testimonies while serving the Lord. I learned that if I was willing to listen and do what God asks, then he would help me accomplish the task. I knew I wanted to go beyond playing music for a living and, with many prayers and fasting on this matter, I later realized God desired for me to be an educator.

I served a couple of years as an elementary school teacher and became involved with our church’s youth programs. Later, I put a pause on teaching to focus on raising my young family full time, but the pull to do something more for our church youth became stronger. I was asked to direct Vacation Church School (VCS) and provide its curriculum. Through formal education, I knew how to write curriculum and working with the youth helped me understand their interests. I eagerly said “Yes” and got to planning. At first, it seemed like an easy task. While listening to his Spirit, any task is easy. In the middle of the planning stage, I *definitely* questioned if this job should be *my* job. Insecurities

and doubts crept in for I am not the best writer. I felt like I was struggling. I prayed and God heard those prayers and the prayers of others who prayed for VCS.

The struggles I had then became nonexistent, or even minimal at best. God really does help those who desire to serve him for his purposes. I knew God desired our youth to learn of him and I was willing to try to facilitate his purposes. With the little faith I had, I was able to provide a huge opportunity for others to witness of God and, in turn, the VCS staff (including me) had received a testimony from being in service to our youth.

God calls us to be a people who are at service for him. Whether it be a small or an arduous task, he will be at our side. Take comfort in knowing that God is with you through the struggles. Recall your own experiences when you had stepped forward in faith. Remember how he worked with you through your own difficulties. Read the scriptures, pray, and fast often. God makes the way for us to complete his tasks and he calls us to build up Zion. It all takes faith. Ask God how you can help and be willing to say “Yes”.

Written by Christina Purvis

Study Guide

Increase Our Faith

The purpose of this lesson is to *increase* our understanding and need for growing our faith, not only individually but corporately, for the fulfillment of God's purposes in our lives and in the life of the church, culminating in the bringing forth of Zion and ultimately preparing us for residence in the celestial kingdom.

As a child we learn faith very simplistically. We are taught that God is like the wind, we can feel his presence as we can feel the wind, but we cannot see him. We are taught that God answers prayers when we put our trust in him. As a young person, faith represents our simple beliefs in an unchangeable God. However, as we grow to maturity and grow in him, we should recognize that faith is the very **essence of power** that God has instilled in us that allows us to draw closer to him. Who we are as a handmaiden of God is built upon the faith we have in Jesus Christ and his true church.

Faith is a principle with sacred promise and power. How we unleash it depends on those things we hope for and how we approach our prayer, study, and fasting habits. If we only hope for faith to combat fear, stress, or the negative things in life, then we are not using our faith to its fullest. Faith should be for the grander fulfillment of God's promises: the ministering of angels, the endowment, healings, and other miracles. Without faith, life appears useless. It has no value other than existence. Arthur Oakman

said, "it is a 'gift of the Spirit'--that it gathers up the soul of men and immerses it in the purposes of God. It is more than intellect and more than good feeling. It encompasses and transcends grim determination. It is 'of the 'Spirit'."

Faith is an active word, one of progress and achievement and light. It is not so much something we believe but something we live. Faith doesn't just happen because you believe. It is keeping our minds, hearts, and spirits focused on all forms of godliness, allowing his Spirit to direct us in all things, never wavering. We must visualize (without doubt and fear) that which we desire to become. "Faith is the life-giving seed out of which all tangible things materialize." The strength of our faith then is manifest in our righteous activities (works). "Faith promises all things, and it perfects all things."

"Exercising faith means contacting that divine power of light. It is divine energy set in action by the mind. Faith is spirit. It is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. It is the life-giving seed out of which all tangible things materialize." "As a man thinketh, so he will become." We must cultivate and exercise it daily for our thoughts become purposeful, linking us to our heavenly Father. "No man will be able to go farther than the strength and vision that his own soul permits him to go." Exercising our faith is faith made knowing.

Increasing our faith through **prayer**:

James tells us to ask in faith, knowing you will receive. We must approach this faith with awe

and reverence through our prayers from the very depths of our soul, for he hears the prayers of the obedient, those that are spoken aloud and those that are spoken constantly in our hearts. ***“Be still and know that I am God.”*** Listen for that still small voice centered in our own soul. Deep in our soul is where the seed of faith is planted. It is where his light bears fruition in us. It is where we develop that inner knowing that nothing is impossible for God and he is working through us. It is through that power that we find joy and his glory. It is through the power and continual earnestness of our prayers that he abides in us and allows us to receive of his glory. It is through the humble earnestness of our prayers that our faith is increased, and faith then becomes knowledge and truth because we "know" that God is. It is imperative, as saints of the most-high God, that we just not know 'about' him, but that we know him personally. "And in that day, you shall know that I abide in you and you abide in me."

Increasing our faith through **study**:

Through study, we can understand the power of faith. Your mind is your connection between your physical body and your soul. It is the connection between your life and God. Study brings a spiritual energy, a mindful enlightenment, that sets in motion the righteous desires of man. Through faith comes knowledge, assurance, and then understanding. Without this faith connection, it is impossible to please God.

"Thoughts are to the mind what food is to the body." There is power when understanding or thought from our study connect with our emotions, thereby increasing our faith. It is absolutely necessary to feed the mind for healthy nourishment, just as we eat healthy food to keep our bodies healthy. Study the history and scriptures of how God dealt with other people. Nourish the mind with study of good books and scripture. Study can also be real life experiences that have brought meaning to our lives. When faith finds expression in our experiences (what you witness), then it becomes knowledge. The brother of Jared had such faith and love of Christ that his understanding passed knowledge and he was filled with the fullness, thereby allowing Christ to show himself to him. Knowledge and intellect follow faith. Doctrine & Covenants 85:36a: ***"Therefore, verily I say unto you, my friends, Call your solemn assembly, as I have commanded you; and as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning even by study, and also by faith."*** Further, in Matthew 7:12, we read ***"... ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be open unto you."***

Increasing our faith through **fasting:**

In Matthew 6:18, we read, ***"But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."*** Psalms 35:13 reads, ***"I humbled my soul with fasting; and my***

prayer returned into mine own bosom.” We also read in D&C 59:3a-b, “That thy fasting may be perfect; or in other words, that thy joy may be full. Verily this is fasting and prayer; or, in other words, rejoicing and prayer.”

Fasting, by definition, is choosing to sacrifice something of value for the purpose of seeking God with more intensity. Fasting without intense prayer and study cannot create the intimate relationship with Christ that we are striving for. We must come to him in complete humility and repentance, offering our love and the surrender of our life to him. It goes far beyond just making a physical sacrifice or abstinence. As our humility increases, it opens our soul and heart, to be purified with full purpose of heart seeking his desires in our lives.

Light then can be brought through this intimate communion with our father. Faith through fasting allows us to align our spirit with his, giving thanks and praising him for his power, his love, his mercy and grace, and his abundance. Self is overcome and we become a vessel in his hands. We develop that eye single to his glory.

As our personal faith is grown, it not only enlivens our spirits, but it benefits the church as a body. Sharing spiritual experiences, and studying together those areas where sharing takes place, lends support. We can all think of individuals in our early life who were examples of great faith and they indeed made an impact on our lives. We may have even relied upon their faith to add strength, knowledge, and understanding to our own faith. We want our faith to be like that same light to our brothers and

sisters. The more righteous, knowledgeable, and faithful we become, the more light can be shared with other people. When faith finds expression in these experiences and understanding with each other, unified faith allows for greater strength as a body: the power of the keys to the kingdom, the hope for and building of Zion.

Christ awaits and is eager to pour out his blessings upon us but it is expedient that we are completely prepared to receive them. It is his desire to bless us with gifts of health, strength, vitality, wisdom, understanding, and eternal life. In deepest humility, we must spiritually visualize his coming and hold fast to a faith that will not fail. ***"...According to your faith be it unto you."*** (Matthew 9:35).

My Daily Prayer

Lord of life, let that mind be in me that was in Christ. Where I find fear in the heart of a friend, may I leave confidence. Where there is bitterness, let me bring understanding; where there is doubt, may I plant faith; where there is suspicion, trust; where there is felt superiority, may the quality of life suggest humility. Where there is chaos, may thy Spirit working in me help to bring order. May my response to darkness anywhere, in the world or in the hearts of men, *be the unfailing glow of my faith in the way of Jesus.*

Amen.

(Taken from Little Prayers for Personal Poise by Helen Toner)

Scripture References: Alma 16:143, James 1:5-6, D&C 8:3d-e, D&C 63:3, Moroni 10:4-5, Moroni 7: 24-31, 41,44, 47-49

Sources: James Speaks of the Works of Righteousness by V. Lee Killpack

Ye are Gods by Annalee Skarin

The Call of Christ In an Age of Dilemma
by Arthur Oakman

Questions:

1. How does prayer, study, and fasting increase our faith?
2. What life experiences have you had that have increased your faith?
3. What attributes must you endeavor to seek so your prayer and fasting are effective?
4. What experiences have you had which have helped you to know God and Christ?
5. What promises do we hope for through our faith?

Written by: Linda Dunn

Worship Visiting Program

Scripture: Doctrine & Covenants 44:3

Hymn: #503 “Blest Be the Tie That Binds”

When my children were young, I started an activity on Sunday afternoons, that at the time, I had no idea would have such an outcome. I wanted to instill in them the need to think about others, especially those that were not regularly around church members. I decided that we would take time every Sunday afternoon and write one letter. On the first and second Sunday we wrote letters to two families that had recently moved to areas where there weren't any church members near-by. Josh and Stephanie would write to the children in the families and I would write to the mothers. The third Sunday we wrote to my grandmother, their great-grandmother. The fourth Sunday they wrote to any friend they wanted.

I had no great expectations beyond helping my children learn the importance of sharing with others. We did this for many years, at times changing who received the letters, but always trying to find someone we thought was in need. Most of the time we received very little input back from those to whom we were writing. Several years later one of the families we had written was visiting in the area and stopped to see me. She confided in me that those letters always uplifted her when she received them. I

had no idea my chatty letters were doing any good. A few years ago, after my grandmother died, I was visiting my aunt who had been clearing out some of Grandma's stuff. She gave me the letters that the kids and I had written to Grandma. I had no idea that our letters touched Grandma enough that she would keep ALL of them. The kids, now adults, have changed from writing letters to their great-grandma, to emailing and sending texts to their grandparents. A habit of staying in touch with others appears to have been fostered. I am grateful that the Lord guided me into that avenue of service and visiting so many years ago.

Written by Marci Damon

Study Guide

Visiting Program

In Matthew 25:35-41, the Lord tells us that, when we feed the hungry, give a drink to someone who is thirsty, house a stranger, clothe the naked, visit someone who is sick or in prison, then we have done it unto him. In Alma 16:223-224, we read that, if we don't visit the sick and turn away the needy, then we are hypocrites and our prayers will be in vain. King Benjamin, in Mosiah 2:43, admonished his people to visit the sick and administer to their relief, both spiritually and temporally. We, the handmaidens of the church, have been counseled in modern day revelation (Remnant Revelation 157:5a) to seek out avenues of opportunity to serve God. What avenues of opportunity might we handmaidens be able do? The above scriptures imply that taking care of each other is extremely important to God. So again, what areas of service might we be able to do?

One area of ministry or calling that seems especially suited for women is providing comfort. An area where comfort can be given and service provided is when we visit our fellow saints. For the most part, we see in the women of the church the tender heart, listening ear, and desire to help that is essential to a visiting program, whether done at the branch level or individually. The following article is a recommendation on how to plan and implement such a program. Changes or alterations to the program may need to be made in order to best fit a branch, or a group of sisters', or an individual's

situation. However, the most important part of this program is simply to go visit.

Here are some suggested groups of saints that could be visited. One group could be those who are sick, another group could be college age students, and the last group could be isolated saints. Again, these are suggestions and you may wish to add other groups to be visited according to the needs in your area. Here are possible guidelines for how to place people in each above-mentioned group. Those who are in the sick grouping would be people who are in a hospital or rehab center, not necessarily someone home with the flu. Those in the college age student's group would be those young people who have graduated from high school, and for the most part, are not living at home. This group would include students away from home in college, or young people who are on their own, but are working, or receiving some kind of training. The idea of visiting this group is to keep in contact with young people who, for the most part, are now on their own, out in Babylon for the first time. Those saints classified as isolated would be those who cannot regularly meet with other saints due to physical limitations, are home bound, are living in a nursing home, or are not living close enough for regular church attendance.

To begin this program, decide which groups of saints will be visited and who is willing to do the visiting. Next, designate a person to identify people from your branch, or area, that would fit into each group, along with their contact information (address, email, phone number, etc.). Depending on how many people are needing visits, and how many sisters are

volunteering to visit, it may be advisable to have a leader for each designated group. The leader of the group who visits the sick will need to compile a list of those saints who are in the hospital or rehab centers each month. When someone is in need of a visit that particular month, the person in charge would notify a sister, who has agreed to visit, and provide her with the contact information. The leader will need to be a person who has the resources to regularly keep up with finding out who is sick.

For the groups of college students and isolated saints, we suggest that the women volunteer for nine months of visiting. The summer months are full of reunions, camps, and vacations, so visiting from September to May maybe advantageous. It is likely that the visiting for the college group would be done via phone and mail (email, letters, cards, etc.), since it is possible that the students will be away from their home branches. For those visiting the isolated saints, it is suggested to have the women work in pairs. This would have the advantage of the sisters encouraging each other to visit, and if it ever happens that one couldn't go for a visit, the other sister could. An option for the leader of this group is to give the visiting sisters, on the first Sunday of each month, the name, address and phone number of the person they are to visit. Each month the visitors would get a new person to visit. Each visiting team would visit a possible of nine different people in the year. Giving the visitors a new name each month will allow the person in charge of the program to stay in contact with the visitors. This contact will assist in finding out what needs the people being visited may have,

encourage the sisters to be timely with their visits, and discover any needs the sisters may have. Also, by rotating the people being visited, the hope is that no one becomes bored or stale with the visiting. It is recommended that the visiting be done in person, where appropriate, but if this can't be done, a phone call, email, or card would be a good alternative. Contact of some kind needs to be made every month. These visits should include fellowship, a time of sharing, encouraging, and assessing needs, as appropriate. The emphasis should always be on fellowship.

When preparing to visit, the following considerations are advised. First, prepare for the visit by praying for discernment, understanding, and guidance. Next, if you are visiting in person, make an appointment with the person to be visited. Call in advance, at least a week prior, and then again 24 hours before the visit, as a reminder. Develop a plan for the visit, what do you want to accomplish. In your plan, recognize that each person has his or her own individual problems, resources, limitations, and opportunities. Be aware of these as you visit. Plan to share information, not to gossip. Plan to provide comfort and encouragement. Expect to do more listening than talking. Plan to be observant and attentive to assess for needs. When you are visiting, remember your plan and always be humble, cheerful, and courteous. Remember that most people are lonely and desire to feel that they belong. Help them to feel that they belong by sharing information on church activities (remember not to gossip). Ask them, if appropriate, to assist with church activities.

For example, could they be the person who calls others about prayer requests, can they call those who have not been to church for a while, or can they be prayer warriors for the branch? After visiting, remember to share concerns or needs with those whom it would be appropriate for them to know, for example, the branch president, or a specific priesthood member, or the woman's leader, etc.

A strong visiting program in each branch can add much strength to the individual branches as well as the church in general. It is the desire of the Women's Council that as much as possible each branch would implement some form of a visiting program. If your branch is unable to develop a visiting program, individuals are also capable of doing their own visiting program. Visiting requires only a willingness and consistency to make it effective. The development of the stewardship of comfort has the potential for many rewarding outcomes.

Questions:

1. How does a visiting program help individuals, a branch, and the church as a whole?
2. What groups could you include in your visiting program?
3. Are there any obstacles to overcome in setting up and implementing a visiting

program in your area? What are they and how could you overcome these obstacles?

4. How will you maintain the motivation to continue the visiting program throughout the coming year?
5. What testimonies do you have, or have heard others give, after visiting someone in need?
6. What outcomes do you think may occur in your area after implementing a visiting program?

Written by the Women's Council

Worship

Being of One Heart and One Mind: Unity

Scripture: Psalm 133:1-3

Hymn: #563 “Are You Ready, O My People”

How do we become of one heart and one mind? I think we can do this by putting God first and love our neighbor second. We must study our scriptures so that we know what God desires of us. If we will study and learn of God’s ways, we will be filled with so much enthusiasm that we can do only the will of God. We will become more holy and can do only what God desires us to do. We must become close with God in order to become close with each other.

Just as we must know our friends to understand them, we must first know God to understand what he desires for us. How do we become close to our friends and those around us? We must get to know them, spend time with them, know their desires, etc. The same is true to become close to God. We must get to know him through prayer and study. That is the only way we can get to know him. Prayer is a way that we can talk with God. We share our desires, our failures, our sins, our thoughts, etc. I always think that, just as a mother would want to hear from her children, to know what is going on with them, God wants to hear from us through our prayers. We need to speak with him daily so that he can show us the way we need to go.

Repentance is needed to become of one heart and one mind. As we repent of our sins, God reveals to us more things that are needed from us. Through repentance, we are able to be forgiven of our past sins and God will reveal to us other sins that we must work on to become one with him. It is a step by step process. Through repentance, we open our hearts to God so that he is able to reveal more things to us. When we repent of one sin, then another one is revealed to us so that we can repent and continue to grow.

As we become closer with God and know of his love, we can then become closer to our neighbors and share that love with them. As we share, we become of one heart and one mind. We will become unified in our efforts to bring forth a place where we can all reside with love and peace: Zion. What can you do to become closer to God and to others?

Written by Jolene Webb

Study Guide

Being of One Heart and One Mind: Unity

Becoming one in heart and mind is the goal of the church and a requirement for Zion. The question is one that has been sought by the righteous in every generation since the days of Adam and continues to be one that demands an answer in order to establish the kingdom of God on earth. But the Lord is merciful to us and has provided the answer in the scriptures. All we have to do is search it out. It is not a one, two, or three situations, but it can be found if we are willing to take the Holy Spirit for our guide and trust in the good Spirit that leads us into all righteousness. So far, we as a people have not been willing to do what the scriptures tell us to do and have persisted in the idea that we need to take care of our families first, then ourselves, and if we have any time left, we think of others.

But the Lord has called us to be submissive to him and allow him to take care of everything we may need. The Nephites were a prime example of this in that the Lord blessed and prospered them when they followed his will, but when they went their own way, he found it necessary to humble them until they repented of their sins and sought him out. Jesus brought this to the people's attention in Matthew 6:36-39 when he chastised them for seeking after the things of the world instead of the things of God. He said, *"Why is it that ye murmur among yourselves, saying, We cannot obey thy word because we have not all these things, and seek to*

excuse yourselves, saying that, After all these things do the Gentiles seek. Behold, I say unto you that your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought of the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day shall be the evil thereof.”

Let us look at the scriptures and see what they are calling us to do. First, we look at Helaman 2:29-31. *“And in the fifty and first year of the reign of the Judges, there was peace also, save it were the pride which began to enter into the church; not into the church of God, but into the hearts of the people who professed to belong to the church of God; and they were lifted up in pride, even to the persecution of many of their brethren. Now this was a great evil, which did cause the more humble part of the people to suffer great persecutions, and to wade through much affliction; Nevertheless, they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling of their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God.”* Here some of the people began to be prideful and persecute their brethren. This caused the more humble part of the people to suffer, but they obeyed the dictates of the Holy Spirit and prepared themselves for a closer walk with the Lord. They

fasted and prayed, grew stronger in their humility, stronger in the faith of Christ (which is a celestial level of faith), were joyful in their tribulation, looked to the Lord when they needed consolation, purified themselves so the Lord could sanctify them, and yielded themselves to the Lord. In other words, they followed the Holy Spirit in all things and prepared themselves for whatever the Lord may ask of them in the days ahead. One of the things that the Lord requires, not mentioned directly in this scripture, is the love for God and the love for others.

This brings us to our next scripture. 1 John, chapters 2, 3, and 4 talk specifically about love and the various ways that it exists in the lives of people. From John's writing, we can see that people in his time were not much different than they are today. There are those who are willing to follow the Lord, submit themselves to him, and reach out to others inside and outside of the church because they are brothers and sisters, regardless of what they are doing or have done. If there is a need, these people do not ask questions or make judgments. They simply fill the need, if possible.

Sometimes it is not possible to fill the need temporally. King Benjamin addressed this issue in Mosiah 2:28-50. Mighty prayer is also always helpful. Prayer should always be borne out of love, not guilt. Remember, these people were our brothers and sisters. They were the same as we are, living in different circumstances, but in need of help none the less. By demonstrating love for their fellowmen, these people were demonstrating their love for the

Lord and their willingness and desire to draw closer to him.

In 1990, Brother Walter Weldon was given and experience in which the Lord told him to *Tell My People!* What followed were twelve points that must be followed by those who desire to be a part of the kingdom of God. These twelve points were given to “His people to prepare them for eternal life.” Among those twelve statements is “Tell My People: Come out of Babylon. Be not partakers of her ways.” This is another thing that we need to do to become one in heart and mind. Zion is a place of righteousness. It is not a “second thought” of the Lord to counter the wickedness of the enemy. It was planned before man existed on the earth, and it has always been the Lord’s desire to make man fit for the kingdom. But, if we persist in our evil ways, we will not share in the blessedness that awaits the true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we really want to be a part of Zion, we need to reject the world and all of its trappings and give ourselves completely to the Lord. Taking to heart the counsel given in Doctrine and Covenants 128:8 will allow us to come out of Babylon and set an example to those around us so they will know without a doubt that the Lord’s way is truly the way to the peace and comfort mankind is seeking, and that we are true representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ. It says: ***“The Spirit saith further: That these organizations contemplated in the law may be effected and the benefits to be derived therefrom be enjoyed by the Saints, in such enjoyment they can not withdraw themselves so completely from a qualified dependence upon their Gentile neighbors***

surrounding them as to be entirely free from intercommunication with them; yet it is incumbent upon the Saints while reaping the benefits of these organizations to so conduct themselves in the carrying into operation the details of their organizations as to be in the world but not of it, living and acting honestly and honorably before God and in the sight of all men, using the things of this world in the manner designed of God, that the places where they occupy may shine as Zion, the redeemed of the Lord.”

Right now, we have no choice but to live amongst Babylon, but that doesn't mean that we have to accept her; it is our responsibility to come out of her and represent the Lord Jesus Christ to the very best of our ability. Some of us are more outgoing and some of us are more reserved, but the Lord knows each of us intimately and will work with us as individuals, and as a group, to bring to pass his righteous purposes.

Considering all of this, how do we become “one heart and one mind?” First, and foremost, we must become a praying people. The church has often been accused of the lack of communication because of this or that, but this cannot happen with the Lord. When we look at the scriptures, just a casual reading of them will reveal that the men of God spent much time in prayer. Whenever they come to a problem they could not handle, they went to the Lord and asked him what they should do. For example, how many of us take the time to ask the Lord what we need to do to build Zion? Each person has talents that can be used to further the kingdom and each person

has something to give that will bring Zion into reality; but how many of us have asked the Lord what we can do? Along with this thought, we need to be ready to follow through with the commitment once it is made known to us. The Lord has promised to answer any questions we may have and that allows us a unique opportunity to find out what we need to do in our lives to bring Zion into a reality.

Next, we need to be in a constant state of repentance. I am not necessarily talking about how sinful we might be. I'm talking about comparing ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ and realizing that we can never become the Son of God. Even though we may attain perfection, he will always be our Savior, and therefore, always be our Lord. We can never replace him; therefore, we should stop trying and admit that we are not as good as we think we are. Jesus is now, always has been, and always will be, our Lord. He came to earth to make it possible for us to be able to return to the Father and live in the celestial kingdom with him and God for eternity. Praise the Lord that this is so! The idea that we are the same as the Lord Jesus is exactly what Satan wants us to believe. He wants to replace the Lord with himself and make us his puppets not give us our freedom. The longer we delay, the bolder the enemy becomes and the more he is encouraged that he will win.

We often hear various restoration people say, "It doesn't matter how we go about building the kingdom; the Lord loves us and we will all be together in the end." However, my answer to that statement is that he also loved the Egyptians, but he

drowned them in the Red Sea. This is the same kind of reasoning that many people outside the church use, but we believe that they are wrong and go to great lengths to show them the error of this kind of thinking. Doing things the right way is the only way the Lord will accept. In fact, he is so emphatic about it that he said: ***“Thus saith the Spirit unto the church: You, my Remnant saints, must be a people who are armed with great humility and charity, that is, the pure love of mine only Begotten Son. You have not learned, sufficiently, to prefer your brothers and sisters in all things. Among my priesthood there still remains too much pride, contention, and self-interest. Purge yourself of these evils. Contend not so much on the interpretation of my word, but reason together and let my Spirit direct you in all things to the end that your Father in heaven shall be glorified and my kingdom unfold before you...In your comings and goings be reverent, always respecting the sacred space of your sanctuaries. If you do this, I will bless you with the ministry of angels and the gift of prophecy”*** (Remnant Revelation 157:6).

Finally, we need to listen. Most often the Lord speaks to us in a still small voice to tell us what he wants us to do. We probably will never be involved in earth-shaking activities that will make the world sit-up and take notice. Zion will most likely be established by people doing small things that will bring about the righteous condition that will enable her to come forth. The Lord told us in Doctrine & Covenants 1:4c-e that the ***“The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty***

and strong ones, that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh, but that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world; that faith also might increase in the earth; that mine everlasting covenant might be established; that the fullness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and simple, unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers.”

Zion waits for a people who will submit themselves to the Lord in all things; let us be that people!

Questions:

1. What is the most reliable source of information regarding Zion?
2. How do I prepare myself for Zion?
3. Shouldn't I take care of my family first?
4. How can I prepare myself for Zion?

Written by Robert Ostrander

Activities

Listed below are various ideas for activities that you may want to incorporate into your studies. The following ideas are meant to help you to get to know your sisters, have a richer and deeper fellowship, provide a service to each other and the church, and become one in heart and mind. Use as many of the activities as you like. Be creative and change or modify them to fit your situation as needed.

Fellowship/Getting to Know Each Other:

1. If we are going to learn to work and grow together, we need to know each other. Choose a meeting to bring an "All About Me" poster. Or you may want to have a different person share at each meeting. On the poster, place pictures or items that represent you. You could use a picture of your family, scraps of material if you're a seamstress or yarn if you're a knitter, something to show that you're a bread baker, etc., to share about yourself. Share a few minutes about who you are and where you came from. Give a brief testimony explaining why you are member of the church. After doing this activity, hidden talents of the sisters may be discovered which might lend itself to doing a special class, such as teaching

bread baking, or quilting, or canning, etc. We all have gifts and talents from the Lord and not sharing them would be like the servant who hid his talents in the dirt.

2. Select a secret sister for the nine months while you are studying the book. Have everyone put their name on a card with their address, birthday, anniversary, hobbies, favorite candy bar, beverage, etc. Throughout the year send a note or card on special occasions, or for no reason at all. Bring a small, inexpensive treat and get another sister to sneak it to your secret sister at a meeting. Try to do something at least once a month. Have a reveal party at your last meeting.
3. Themed Parties. These parties can be done with the whole branch, or just with the sisters. At the start of the year have a birthday party for everyone's upcoming birthday. Divide people up according to their birth month. If there are enough people, there can be twelve groups (a group for each month) or, if needed, combine two or three months together to form a group. With supplies provided (markers, construction paper, tissue paper, glue, etc.) have each group decorate a birthday poster, a cardboard cake, or their table for the birthday party. After decorating, enjoy a potluck of desserts and allow the group that won

first prize in decorating go first to get dessert. In the spring, have a potluck dinner and afterwards have a hymn fest. Start with hymns that were written for the dedication of the Kirtland Temple and continue on with Restoration authors. In the fall, have a costume party. Have everyone come as their favorite person in the scriptures. Go for a hayride, do a scavenger hunt, or play games. At the end, make s'mores. You can find directions on the Internet for doing them in the oven if you don't want or can't have an open fire.

Service Projects:

1. Distribute a blank calendar page and classify each day of the week for a particular priesthood or member. Next, obtain a copy of the monthly priesthood schedule. For each day of the week, list a particular priesthood office that will be prayed for on that day. For example, Saturday might have the names of those who will be preaching on Sunday morning and evening. One day could be for the presiders of a service. One day could be for the ministry of music and pianist/organist. One day could be for the

deacons in-charge. One day could be for the priesthood member giving the Aaronic Moments thoughts. And so forth. One day could even be for those who will be attending the services that week. Each day, pray for that particular person or persons who will be bringing ministry. The combined prayers of the sisters throughout each day will be a special blessing for all those involved.

2. Have a fall cleaning day. Either get together to do a deep cleaning of the church building or find a sister who is in need of help with giving her home a good annual cleaning. Maybe the sister is elderly and no longer able to do the cleaning she use to do, or perhaps the sister is a young mother who is struggling to find time to do a deep clean. Carefully approach the topic with whomever you would like to help with the cleaning to make sure that helping would not offend them.
3. Have a spring planting day. Get together to plant some annual flowers around the church building or put together some pots with annual flowers or plants in them to give to saints who are home bound or in a nursing home. For this project, you will need donated bulbs or seeds, garden tools, and for the pots, plants/flowers and potting soil. Have fun spreading some of God's beauty.