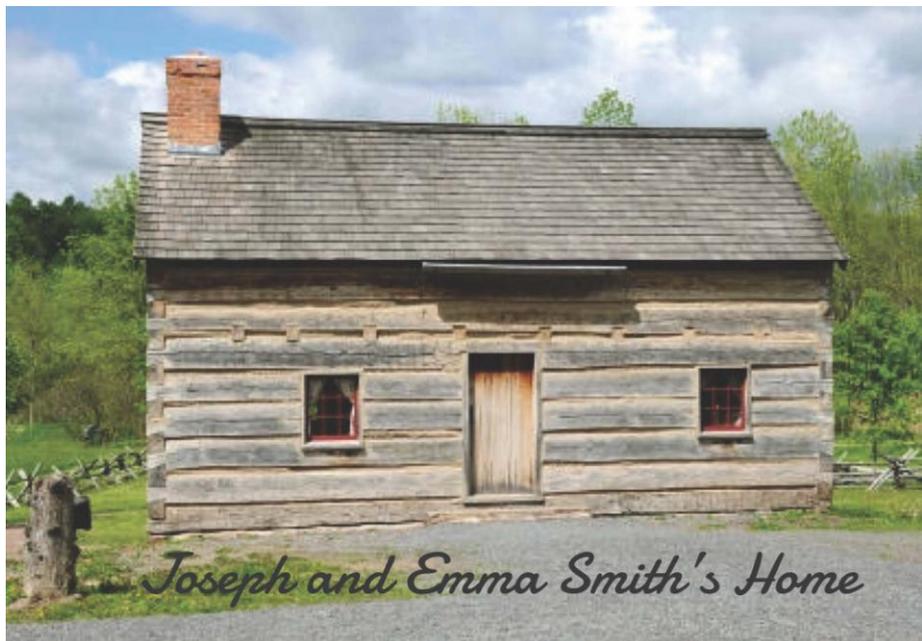


# *Zion's Homes Study Program*



Women's Council

Volume 2

*Zionic*

*Homes*

*Study Program*

Universal to all families of Christ's church is the need to reside in a home where a Zionic condition is the foundation. Ideally, all members of the family strive to develop such a home. Realistically, it is often the woman who becomes the driving force in developing such a home life. Regardless of her marital status she has a unique opportunity, as well as responsibility, to give focus to creating Zion in its most fundamental place. How can our neighborhoods, our church or communities find the fulfillment of Zion if it is not resident within our homes?

When we take time to look at the unique qualities of a Zionic home, we see many areas, both temporally and spiritually, that can be developed, nurtured and grown. In this study book we will look at nine of those areas. This book is not meant to be all inclusive, nor exclusive, but instead a firm starting point from which, we trust, each woman will cultivate her own special role in developing Zion within her home. Whether it is shared by many or few, your home can become the nucleus of a thriving and responsive home where God is ruler, King, and companion to all.

The Women's Council  
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## **Worship**

### **Our Physical Well-Being**

Scripture: Philippians 4:8-9

Hymn: #358 “Look for the Beautiful”

There is good in everything if one looks for it. All of life is a mixed blessing, depending upon one’s focus. There’s always bugs and singing birds on our camping or picnics trips. It all depends on which one you give attention to: the bugs that land on one’s arm or sandwich at the picnic or the singing birds that joyfully sing in the trees near-by.

It was in my grade school years that I was given a great understanding of what one should or could be focused on in one’s life. My third-grade teacher was a woman who had an infirmity all her life. She was born with a club foot. I’m sure her family found it to be a challenge in her young life. A weaker child often demands more attention of father and mother. Often this extra demand brings out the best, or the worst in people. But, they overcame the challenge as she grew into a young woman and saw the brilliant mind within her. Her parents sent her to school where she received her teaching degree.

I remember her walking our class down the halls to go to other classrooms. Concrete floors, oh how painful it must have been. And yet she carried such a beautiful spirit about her. She didn’t concentrate her mind on the bugs of life but on the singing, soaring spirit within her, that which God himself gives to overcome the challenges one is given in one’s life. As a child, this influenced my life greatly and even today as I think about her life. It takes a blind faith to be cheerful and to see that there is much good in everything, if one looks for it. It’s enough to make one lose their religion - or enough to make one use their religion.

Written by Linda Evans

## **Study Guide**

### **Our Physical Well-Being**

When someone asks you how is your physical well-being, what do you think of? Many people have different ideas of what affects our physical well-being, but for the most part, alcohol and tobacco consumption, diet, and exercise are the major contributors to our physical well-being. Our diet, what we choose to eat or not eat, will have a significant bearing on our physical well-being and our health. Because the church has been given insightful information about how to take care of our bodies through different scriptures, let us take some time to explore what the Lord has told us about our physical bodies. In preparing this lesson, I used the Doctrine & Covenants, *The Word of Wisdom* by Mildred Smith, and current nutritional information.

When we read Section 86 (also known as the Word of Wisdom) of the Doctrine & Covenants, we discover some interesting information. The first thing is that the Word of Wisdom is a revelation intended to be used as a recommendation but not necessarily a commandment. Even though the Word of Wisdom may not be a commandment, when the Lord gives a recommendation, it is wise for us to pay close attention. So, let us take a moment and see what the Word of Wisdom says.

The Lord revealed that drinking alcohol is not good, but instead is to be used for the washing of the body. Tobacco is not for the body, but for bruises and for sick cattle. Hot drinks are also not for the body. All wholesome herbs and fruits are to be used with prudence and thanksgiving. Meat is to be eaten sparingly. All grain is to be used by man, but wheat especially is for the use of mankind. If we do these things AND keep the commandments of God, we will have wisdom and knowledge and shall “...**run and not be weary and walk and not faint...**” (D&C 86:3d). That sounds like good physical well-being!

God gave the Word of Wisdom, as stated before, as a recommendation, an encouragement, not a commandment. Our bodies are our stewardship; therefore, he gave the revelation as an expression of love and concern, not as a constraint. In Mark 7:15, it states, ***“There is nothing from without, that entering into a man, can defile him, which is food; but the things which come out of him; those are they that defile the man, that proceedeth forth out of the heart.”*** In I Corinthians 10:31, we read, ***“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”*** These scriptures give an example of God’s general attitude towards food. There is nothing non-beneficial that he will forbid us to eat; it is our attitude, our words and our thoughts which will defile us. However, since our health is part of our stewardship, paying attention to what we eat is noteworthy.

God is concerned about our health. Let us take a moment and look at the definition of health: *a state of optimal physical, mental, and social well-being; and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity.* In Mildred Smith’s book, she stated, *“A sound body with all parts functioning effectively, a mind alert and serene, a spirit that responds positively to the nature of God – these constitute health.”* What a beautiful definition of physical well-being. God’s concern for our health is not limited to the food that we eat. In other scriptures, we are told about the amount of sleep we are to receive, when to go to bed and when to get up; to be clean; and even our attitude – to love, not to be covetous, not to find fault one with another, to clothe ourselves with charity, and so on. Our health is affected by the food we eat, our cleanliness, the activities we are involved in, our rest and recreation, our attitude towards God and others, and life in general. Let us take a moment and consider the nutritional aspect of our health.

Nutrition is defined as the process involved in taking in nutrients (proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals) and digesting and utilizing them. When the Word of Wisdom was given, nutrition as a science was in its infancy. The following is a list of examples to help put this into perspective. In 1795, the British started using lemons and limes to cure and prevent scurvy, but they didn’t understand how or why this worked. In 1830,

publications came out stating not to eat fruits and vegetables. They thought that doing so caused cholera. In 1840, it was discovered that food was made up of proteins, carbohydrates and fats. Just over one hundred years ago, 1912, was when they just began to discover vitamins. Yet in 1930 they were still trying to discover all the vitamins and the amount needed of each to maintain health. It wasn't until right before WWII that there started to be an interest in the nutritional status of people. Due to this interest, it was discovered in the 1940's, 1950's, and 1960's, that some diets were lacking certain nutrients. The government began instructing people on good dietary practices. They started with the "Basic Four": vegetables, fruits, meats, and grains. Next, they produced what became the food chart, also known then as the food pyramid, and today now urges the food plate: fruits, protein, dairy, vegetables and grains (veggies and grains being the largest portion). For the early church, there was little in the way of nutritional knowledge and understanding. It is easy to see the wisdom of the Lord in instructing the church on nutritional guidelines; the Lord was over a hundred years ahead of man.

Next, let us look at each recommendation in the Word of Wisdom revelation. God mentioned that alcohol is not good for our bodies: it is for washing of the body. Sacramental wine is to be pure unfermented wine of the grape that we make, or as we would say, grape juice. Alcoholism effects society on many avenues, whether financially, in our family life, or individual health. There is prudence in not partaking of alcohol and, therefore, avoiding the difficulties that can arise from alcoholism.

Tobacco is another item mentioned. Here the Lord simply states it is not for our bodies but is for bruises and sick cattle. Tobacco is addictive with many adverse effects to one's health. The addiction for some is as hard to break as addiction to illicit drugs. Any disease that effects our breathing has the potential to cause extreme distress. Tobacco, in one way or another, greatly impacts breathing and one's health.

The Lord continues in the Word of Wisdom to talk about hot drinks. Any drink hotter than 120 degrees Fahrenheit can cause damage to the tissues of the mouth, esophagus, and stomach. To

say we cannot drink anything that is “warm,” that we must only drink things which are “cold” however, does not make sense. We would be drastically limiting ourselves to what we could drink and eat. We would not be able to drink or eat soup or other similar foods. The important aspect here is how warm or hot is our drink and food. Burns are a serious danger and therefore how “warm” we drink our beverages should be evaluated in order to prevent damage to our bodies. President Israel A. Smith wrote that tea and coffee qualify as “strong drinks,” as mentioned in the Word of Wisdom. Hyrum Smith was also known to have preached stating that the Word of Wisdom had reference to tea and coffee. Caffeine-containing beverages may qualify as “strong drinks.” Caffeine is habit forming and can cause health issues. Some of these health issues are: restlessness, nervousness, insomnia, sleep disorders, gastrointestinal disturbances (stomach and intestines), tachycardia (increase heart rate), respiratory failure, and seizures. The question of hot drinks and strong drinks are for each person to decide for themselves, and hopefully we are honest with ourselves and recognize that, as with most things, wisdom is the key ingredient in making a decision, and not “but I really like to drink this.”

The Word of Wisdom further mentions wholesome herbs and fruits. What are herbs? By definition they are leafy vegetables such as kale, collards, spinach, cabbage, Brussel sprouts, lettuce, alfalfa, broccoli, celery, asparagus, etc. And what are fruits? Fruits are more than the sweet, fleshy products of plants that contain seeds (such as watermelon and strawberries). They are any product of a plant. By this definition that would include foods such as potatoes, beans, peanuts, okra, peppers, cucumbers, squash, nuts, beets, etc. We see from these examples that when the Word of Wisdom mentions all wholesome herbs and every fruit are to be used with prudence and thanksgiving, that is including all our vegetables and fruits. The more variety of fruits and vegetables we eat, the more variety of vitamins and minerals we get.

In the Word of Wisdom, when herbs and fruits are mentioned (D&C 86:2a), a phrase “*in the season thereof*” is used. Mildred Smith explains this phrase doesn’t have to do with when

foods should be used – only when the Lord provided them, not when they could be prepared to be eaten at a later time. In the Scriptures, “season” has referred to the time in which the Lord has provided for our needs (Duet. 28:12, D&C 59:4d). The ideal way to eat fruits and vegetable is straight from the garden, correctly prepared, but we are not always able to do this. Generally, freezing preserves food most nearly as it comes from harvest. Canned fruits and vegetables still have many of their nutrients in the liquid they were canned in. Our challenge is to harvest the foods in the season that God has given them to us, preserve them in a way that keeps as many nutrients as possible, and then serve them in a way that continues to keep as many nutrients available as possible when eaten. How this is accomplished is determined by each individual. But remember, it is to be done with prudence and thanksgiving. Part of “with prudence” is eating the correct amount of fruits and vegetables. The recommended daily amount of vegetables is 2 and ½ cups. A cup of broccoli is about the size of a baseball. The recommended daily amount of fruits is 2 cups.

The Word of Wisdom goes on to explain that meat is to be eaten sparingly. God did not forbid the eating of meat. One way to read D&C 86:2b is that we are to eat meat sparingly at all times. Another way it can be read is that the “only” means “except,” so meat is to be eaten sparingly in the winter, cold, and during famine. Again, this is one where the individual will need to decide what is best for him or her. Our current nutritional information shows that most Americans eat more meat than needed. Certain health issues related to eating too much meat is increased cholesterol and heart disease. Decreasing our meat consumption allows for other foods (veggies, fruits, and grains) to be consumed. The recommended daily amount of protein (not meat only: beans, nuts, etc.) is 5 and ½ ounces. To help us recognize visually how much a portion of meat is, 3 ounces of lean meat would be the same size as a deck of cards. Another example is 1 ounce of lunch meat is the same size as a compact disc. The Word of Wisdom does not mention fish. Fish is not a meat the Lord limited. Again, the current nutritional recommendation suggests eating seafood twice weekly.

Grains are next discussed in the Word of Wisdom. All grain is good for the use of man, but wheat is specifically mentioned for man. The recommended daily amount of grains is 6 ounces, with 3 of those ounces being from whole grain. One small slice of bread, about the size of an index card, is approximately 1 ounce. Whole grains are better for the additional nutrients in them, and for the added fiber.

Current nutritional suggestions make the following recommendations. Pick healthy foods that you and your family will eat. No matter how nutritional or good a particular food may be, it will do you no good if you don't eat it. Cut back on foods high in solid fats (butter, margarine, lard), added sugars (especially in drinks) and salt. Watch portion sizes. When it comes to food, bigger is not always better. Also remember to be physically active. It is recommended that, as adults, we get approximately 30 minutes of physical activity daily. Limit sitting and start moving more. Walking, jogging, swimming, riding a bike, mowing the lawn, taking the stairs, or cleaning (especially vacuuming or mopping) are good activities that help get us moving. These aerobic activities, and others like them, help with circulation, regulating blood pressure and blood sugar, and assist in maintaining muscle tone and bone density. Chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers can be greatly affected by our diet, tobacco and alcohol consumption, and a lack of physical activity. Let us be wise stewards of our body and practice healthy habits. The Lord calls workers to thrust in and reap the harvest. May we have the physical well-being to do that!

### **Questions:**

1. Why is God concerned with my physical well-being?
2. Why do I need to be a wise steward of my body?
3. How can I improve my health?

4. What do I want to do to help with the building of the kingdom, do I have the physical well-being to do this?

Written by Marci Damon

**Worship**

# Our Homes

Scripture: Doctrine & Covenants R157:5b

Hymn: #515 “O Give Us Homes Built Firm”

How is it that, even as an adult, I have such fond memories of my grandmother’s house? Yes, I also have fond memories of my grandmother, but why do I remember her home so well? In fact, if you were to ask me to think about a home, it would be grandma’s home that would come to mind, not necessarily the home I grew up in.

There was nothing special about her home. Or was there? Grandma’s house was an ordinary two-story brick house. But grandma turned that ordinary brick house into a very special home. Grandma filled that home with treasures!

Her treasures had no earthly price tag, and although mostly intrinsic, they were of great heavenly value. Grandma showed me the treasure of “patience,” although I didn’t pick that one up very well and, in fact, am still working on it. No matter how many times she had to instruct me on how to do something, she never lost her patience with me. She didn’t even raise an eyebrow at me. She gave me the treasure of “not giving up.” Grandma didn’t let anything get in the way of her goal. Even at the age of 85, when she was wallpapering her kitchen and couldn’t find her ladder, she overcame her problem. The kitchen table became her ladder; at times, she was still working on her own treasure of wisdom. She shared her treasure of “teaching” with me. Grandma is the first person I remember talking to me about the Holy Spirit and the importance of being sensitive to its leadings. To this day, that lesson on the Holy Spirit is still vivid in my mind and influences my actions.

Grandma’s home was filled with a rich and overflowing love. She made everyone who walked into her home feel special. She had a clean and inviting home for all who visited, and because she was a wise steward of her garden, she also had delicious goodies to share. Even as a young child, I could sense in

grandma's home the peace, joy and serenity of a Zioniac home. Grandma's home gave me the example and the encouragement that I could build my own Zioniac home. May we, as saints, always strive to create not a house, but a home where Jesus is taught, experienced, and is King!

Written by Marci Damon

## **Study Guide Our Homes**

Joshua 24:15 states, ***“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land we dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”***

God instituted homes when he created the world. Fish have water homes, birds make nests and animals have lairs and dens. Even cattle, sheep and horses live close in herds to shield against weather, predators and to tend their young. People came along and God put them into the Garden of Eden. When they were driven out, other accommodations were made. There have been caves, tepees, yurts, log cabins, castles, modern homes, apartments, RV’s and the list goes on. In Belize, I even saw families put together sheet metal to make sides and a roof for a home. If they were “wealthy” they had a dangling light bulb.

All of these buildings are just abodes. It takes the people inside to make a home. There is an old saying, “Home is where the heart is.” Since Jesus should be in our hearts at all times, then Jesus should be the center of our homes. We are admonished in D&C R154:4b to establish family altars. There is just a small sentence referring to it. It almost seems insignificant, but it is extremely important to the welfare of our homes. These altars can be like our homes - very simple to very elaborate. The choice is ours. The main thing is to have it in a quiet spot where we can focus on Jesus and what he wants us to do with our lives. III Nephi 8:52 says, ***“Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed.”*** Prayer should be something taught and used from cradle to grave. Alma 16:219 says, ***“Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him; cry unto him when ye are in your fields; yea, over all your flocks; cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening; yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies; yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness.”***

When my five children were young, I sat between the girls' and boys' rooms. I would read them a Bible story, listen to their prayers and sing a few camp songs to them to settle them for the night. It still works when I stay with the grandchildren too. It makes my heart glad to watch our young ones get so excited to take their turns saying grace at mealtimes. Prayer should be a focal point in our homes, but what else is there.

D&C R157:5 gives some specific duties for the women of the church. We are to be teachers not only to children, but also to our neighbors. We are to keep our homes prepared for whatever happens. We are to share our abundance of what we have with others. And we are to do all of this with a cheerful heart. My mother gave me a plaque that says, "My home is clean enough to be healthy and dirty enough to be happy." Living on a cattle ranch makes it hard to keep all of the dirt from being tracked in. I also tend to keep too many things. It is always good to go through our things and get rid of what we don't need. I sew and end up with several remnants of material. I have good intentions to use it for quilts, but often run out of time and energy to follow through.

Last year I took a lot of the scraps to the 4-H office to share with the beginning quilters. They were delighted. Our children outgrow their clothes, and we either pass them down or get rid of them by sharing with others. We may not outgrow ours, but we need to do the same with our clothes. My girls taught me how much fun it is to shop at the "Janimart" or the "Paulamart" etc. We need to continually take stock of what we have and what is clutter. Remember that our clutter could be someone else's treasure.

Teaching our young women the old ways of doing things like gardening, canning, cooking, baking, sewing, knitting, crocheting, art work, etc. is very important. All of these are important assets to know when we try to enhance the care of our homes. It is a joy to be able to help each other. I always enjoy knitting and have shared this knowledge with our local 4-H group. I also knitted several baby blankets and had enough to share in Boise with the school for unwed mothers. The older women can also be taught new ways by the younger ones. Years ago, I told my

husband I didn't need a microwave because I was doing just fine without one. He finally insisted so we could have baked potatoes more often. I heard several ladies say they only used theirs to heat water or cook hot dogs. When I got mine, I decided I would learn how to really use it. A few years later I was fixing lunch for the branding crew when my stove quit. I was able to fix the whole meal in the microwave. The only thing questioned were the rolls. They were cooked but were still as white as if they were still dough.

As far out as we live, the power can go off for extended periods of time. It is always nice to have use of our grill to boil water for breakfast or to grill steaks and veggies for supper. We can always share our bounty. Many gardeners bring their excess to share with others at church or farmer's markets. My husband and I don't eat a lot of jelly, but I love to make it. I love being able to share with family and friends. I also bake dozens of cookies to share at church, at the Capitol and many other places.

Many things are done in the home, but we must be ready to open our hearts and homes to the outside world. I've had the opportunity to do some international travel. The true privilege has been the ability to meet in homes everywhere I've been. It is also a privilege to open my home to some of these of other cultures. When my children were younger, we traveled to Japan. The children wanted to turn their noses up to some of the food. I told them they should try things because our Japanese friends had eaten at our house. One of my children said, "But mama, you serve REAL food." We used this as a teachable moment to show what is "real" food to us could be very different to someone else. We must watch for those teachable moments to help and encourage those around us. Helaman 5:87-88 says, ***"And now my beloved brethren, behold, I declare unto you that except ye shall repent, your houses shall be left unto you desolate; yea, except ye repent, your women shall have great cause to mourn in the day that they shall give suck; For ye shall attempt to flee, and there shall be no place for refuge; yea, and wo unto them which are with child, for they shall be heavy, and can not flee; therefore they shall be trodden down, and shall be left to perish..."***

This seems a little dire, but we need to look at what kind of helpmates we are to our husbands. We need to keep our homes in a manner so it can be a peaceful place for all to come into. We need to know how to divide the workload so everything gets done without hostility. I have a daughter who has a husband and twins. She works out of the home. Her husband enjoys cooking and oft times gets home before she does. In their home, he does most of the cooking and she cleans up. The children are also being taught their chores. They are also being taught that the jobs in the home can be for either sex. It is important for us to teach our sons as well as our daughters homemaking skills. One of my sons has three daughters and he can do a pretty good job of braiding their hair. All of my boys have been taught some basic cooking skills and how to sew on buttons. They needed to know these skills when they were away at school before they married.

Luke 10:39-43 tells the story of Jesus coming to Martha and Mary's house. Martha is slaving away in the kitchen while Mary is listening to Jesus teach. Martha wants to reprimand Mary, but Jesus cautions that both should take the time to learn from him. We need to be sure that we take time for ourselves to study and regroup. As a young mother, I remember just wanting to hear a little adult conversation once in a while. My husband would come home and I would ask how his day went. He would say, "Fine." When I told him of my need for more conversation, he opened up and we learned a lot more about what each of us were doing while apart. Even if it is only five to fifteen minutes a day, we need to go to our quiet spot so we can meditate. Even the little ones can be taught that mama has five minutes to herself. It takes patience and a big clock they can watch to know when mama's time is up. When I had a house full of small children, I would get them down for naps and walk around the outside of the house three times just to regain that peace of mind. Nowadays I set my alarm for study time each morning.

We should also be ready to open our homes to those outside. I grew up an only child and we always had extra room in our home. It seems like we always had a spare room for any of the traveling ministers. What a wonderful experience it was to

welcome them into our home and be able to sit under their continued ministry. My favorite saying in our home is, "I love to have company so I get my house cleaned up." Since we don't always know when someone is coming, we try to have it somewhat clean all the time. We do love to entertain. Our immediate family has grown to the point that we even built a guest cabin across the drive from our house. Some of our favorite times is when we can open all this space up for church retreats. It is nice to have these times to try our Zion living in a group. Once we even dealt with no power for several hours. Sometimes some of our neighbors will join in the fellowship and services too. This is one of the ways we can be in the world but away from it at the same time. D&C 30:2 was written to Thomas Marsh, but could also be written to us. It reads, ***"Lift up your heart and rejoice, for the hour of your mission is come; and your tongue is loosed, and you shall declare glad tidings of great joy unto this generation. You shall declare the things which have been revealed to my servant Joseph Smith, Jr. You shall begin to preach from this time forth: yea, to reap in the field which is white already to be burned; therefore, thrust in your sickle with all your soul; and your sins are forgiven you; and you shall be laden with sheaves upon your back, for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Wherefore, your family shall live."***

Everything we do should be to the glory of God. It is time for us to evaluate what is good and what we should get rid of in our homes to have it always prepared for Christ to come in. It is our responsibility to teach, especially the little ones. If we don't teach, how are our young men going to grow up and be ready to preach in Zion? Our homes should be kept neat with a quiet spot set aside for worship. If we don't have a family worship center, God might not know where to come. We need to be prepared and ready to prepare a meal for just ourselves to a whole houseful at a moment's notice. I have not talked previously, but we should also try to have these meals nutritious and in accord with the Word of Wisdom so our bodies and minds will be more able to do and say those things the Lord would have us do. We need to always find something good to think on each and every day. When we have a more positive attitude Satan cannot abide in us. Even when

everything seems against us, look for the beautiful. It is there with God's help.

**Questions:**

1. What does your altar look like and how often do you use it?
2. What do you do to help in your home and in your community?
3. What kind of talents do you have to share?
4. How can you balance your time better to make your home more comfortable and Christ like?

Written by Paula Brackett

**Worship  
Our Use of Time**

Scripture: I John 2:17

Hymn: #467 “Take Time to Be Holy” or #424 “Give of Your Best to the Master”

Time is often considered more valuable than money. We hire accountants and use banks to help us manage, budget, and protect our money, so why don't we do the same with our time? The Lord has entrusted us to be good stewards of our time, and it is up to us to manage, budget, and protect how we use each moment.

In Psalm 90:12, the psalmist petitions God, ***“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”*** He is asking that his people might understand that their time is limited on this earth so that they will use their time to seek the wisdom of God. We must do the same.

How do we determine what God would have us do with our time? First of all, we are instructed to search the Scriptures and study daily. We are reminded in Psalms 119:105 to rely on the word of God to direct our way. ***“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.”*** The Lord gives us guidance and direction for how to use our time in the Scriptures.

God desires that we should spend much time in prayer. Paul the Apostle wrote in his letter from Corinth, ***“Pray without ceasing.”*** We should pray for loved ones and for our leaders. Pray for strength and wisdom. We cannot live according to God's will unless we are going to God in prayer to seek his direction for our lives. Time for prayer must be budgeted and purposely planned daily.

Plan time for family and friends. Relationships take a commitment of time together, and we have an obligation to raise our children to know God. Likewise, it is our duty to take care of our parents as they get older. In 1 Timothy 5:8, the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy, ***“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.”***

Also, make time to take care of your health. Eat a healthy diet and make sure you are getting enough sleep and exercise. In I

Corinthians, Apostle Paul reminds us, ***“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”***

God also wants us to help others. There are many people who need assistance in our church, our families, and our communities. In Galatians 6:2, we are advised to ***“Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.”*** There are many ways to help others. It may be as simple as lending an ear, sending a note, making a call, or sending a text.

Finally, in this fast-paced world that we live in, make some time for quiet meditation. In Psalms 46:10 it says, ***“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.”***

How could our lives be improved and our paths made straighter if we prioritize our time more efficiently? This might mean that we need to sort out less important activities that are not valuable in God's eyes. Although this may be difficult, the joy you experience will be greatly worth it. The Lord does not want to be an afterthought or for us to use our leftover time for him. He wants us to devote meaningful time for his will. In Matthew 6:33, it says, ***“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.”***

Written by Danelle Woodruff

## **Study Guide Our Use of Time**

Time became infinitely more important when Jesus was born in the meridian of time, when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1-16). Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, died and was resurrected to take upon himself our sins and transgressions.

In the Book of Mormon (Alma 16:215-232), Alma explains in great detail how we are to spend our time for Jesus: from our prayer life to caring for others in need. Alma pleads with us to use “...*this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity...*” to improve our time before “...*the night of darkness, wherein there can be no labor performed.*” He tells us to exercise our faith unto repentance, to pour out our souls to the Lord in our secret places, and to have a prayer in our hearts at all times.

We receive further instruction as to the kind of lives we should lead in Romans 12:1-18. This is our time, sisters, to stand fast in the Lord Jesus Christ in his eternal love (charity); to recognize and use the various gifts he has given us and to live together peaceably in unity, always overcoming evil with good.

Part of the Remnant Church’s mission statement is “*to prepare and gather a righteous people for the building of the Kingdom of God on earth, Zion.*” The Lord has spoken to us through his latter-day prophet of the Remnant Church, Frederick N. Larsen, regarding the wise use of our time. We are told that the Bridegroom desires to come quickly, and he promises his endowing power to assist us in our preparation as his Bride. We must readily obey by giving our time, talents, gifts, blessings and even treasures to the work that lies before us. He warns that Satan will try to thwart our efforts on every hand. He will try to convince us that there is really no hurry and we should put our own needs first; that there will be plenty of time to obey God’s commands later on (Doctrine & Covenants R148:5).

But God tells us in Doctrine & Covenants R154:4b, “*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 prepare ourselves and our families for the time of his mercy and justice, the end of times, we are to free ourselves of monetary debt and to strengthen our homes by establishing family altars. As we

seek him in our quiet places, we will have peace to our souls. This peace comes by God's Holy Comforter dwelling in us (John 14:16-21). We are to cleave unto God as he cleaves unto us to become righteous and obedient people (Jacob 4:4-12). We are not able to cleave to God without yielding our very souls or our wills to his will, and thus becoming truly his consecrated children.

Helaman explains that this is our opportunity while in this life to yield our hearts unto God (Helaman 2:31). It's not so much what we say that is important, but what we actually do each day! Whether we live in the light of Jesus Christ or hearken to the world and our own selfish desires (D&C R160:5, R162:9). Our daily lives are the testimony of our holy works spent for Jesus and the work to which we are called: the building up of God's kingdom on earth, Zion (D&C R162:5). We are further counseled, "... *you are of the chosen few...read, study and obey*" (D&C R162:5).

Finally, Nephi would remind us that before we enter into the service of our Lord, we must pray for each activity we perform to be consecrated by God for the welfare of our very souls. (II Nephi 14:4-12). And now the words of our latter-day prophet, "... *All of you, my handmaidens, are counseled to be gentle, but firm in your witness of my gospel and in your teaching and guiding of the children and youth of my Church. Be cheerful and let your countenances reflect the joy in serving all mankind. Always be guided by the hope of Zion and its fulfillment through your labors of love.*" (D&C R157:5b-c).

### Questions:

1. What should be the focus of our walk in this life?
2. How do we use our time wisely in this walk of life?
3. How can we discern the needs of others?
4. What is your calling as a daughter of Zion?

5. What does it mean to “Love the Lord thy God with all your heart, might, mind and strength?”

Written by Ben Galbraith

## **Worship Attitude of Forgiveness**

Scripture: Matthew 18:21-22

Hymn: #604 “Amazing Grace”

Forgiveness is one of the greatest gifts that God has given us. Without forgiveness, anger and resentment would harden our hearts to others. Jesus modeled the spirit of forgiveness that he wants us to have when he was hanging on the cross by nails. He said this about the soldiers who were inflicting this cruel death: **"... Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"** (Luke 23:35). Despite all of the terrible things people were doing to him, Jesus still forgave them.

As Christians, we are commanded to forgive and restore all relationships, and if we do this, then God will forgive our sins. **"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, who trespass against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses"** (Matthew 6:16). If we do not forgive others, then the Lord will not forgive us.

It is one thing to *say* the words, *I forgive you*. It is another thing to actually *mean* it. **"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"** (Ephesians 4:31-32).

In order to truly forgive someone, you have to open your heart and let go of the pain, anger, and hurt. The Lord commanded us to forgive others because he wants to protect us. We are the ones who are released from the bondages of anger and resentment when we forgive, not the person who hurt us. If we do not forgive, then there is a divider that stands between God and us, and God does not want that. God's love for us is beyond our understanding. **"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye"** (Colossians 3:13).

Written by Danelle Woodruff

## **Study Guide**

### **Attitude of Forgiveness**

I have a childhood memory of a time when I was about four and a half years old, and my sister was just turning three. We are on the large front porch of the house we were then living in, and I remember my mother is kneeling down, between the two of us little girls. I know I am very angry with my sister, but time has

erased the specific reason for this anger. Mom is holding one of my hands in one of hers and one of my sister's in her other one. She says to my sister, "Tell Ardyce you are sorry." My sister glares at me and says, "I sorry." Even as a preschooler, I know she doesn't mean it, and I am impatient for this little exercise to be over so I can tell her so. Then my mother looks at me, and says, "Tell Margy you forgive her." What? I look in confusion at my mother. She repeats herself, "Margy said she is sorry; now you have to say you forgive her." I stand there, staring at my mother, until I finally realize she is not going to let me go until I do what she says. So, I mumble, "I forgive you," without any clue of what that means. All I know is that now I can't let my little sister "have it" after Mom goes back in the house. Huh!

This is, I believe, my first experience with the concept of forgiveness. It wasn't very positive, but the memory has value for at least three reasons. First, as an adult who long ago made the covenant of baptism in Christ's church, I understand the purpose my mother had in teaching us that forgiveness is a necessary part of our life as followers of Jesus. Secondly, I understand that true forgiveness can never be forced from a person by any other person. And finally, I understand that forgiveness is a huge concept and that it will take most of our lives to truly exercise it in the way that God has planned.

Fast-forward now to a time when I am grown, married with grown children who are also married, and I am in the final two or three years of my teaching career. I have always gotten along well with my colleagues, and I love my students. Suddenly, out of the clear blue, one day I am falsely accused of inappropriate actions. My world suddenly reels out of focus, and I don't know which way to turn. I am sent home on "administrative leave" and spend the next seven months in a state of constant agitation and anguish. For a while, I imagine the worst and can cling only to God in prayer. I am quite literally upheld by the prayers of my family, friends and church family. As the situation is resolved, I find that I will be moving on in a different venue, and I give the glory and thanks to my heavenly Father who asked only that I trust him. He has led

me through the storm and will be with me always, in ways I never imagined possible.

Over time, however, I struggle with the memories of the hurt and try to reconcile it in my Christian walk. I know that forgiveness is required, but it seems almost impossible. I sometimes feel just like that little four-year-old girl, glaring back at the sister who isn't really sorry. Then, slowly, through study and questioning, I realize that forgiveness doesn't excuse someone's hurtful behavior. It doesn't mean that what happened was all right. It doesn't even mean the offender has to be sorry! It means that I have to acknowledge to my Father in heaven that I forgive and leave the rest to him. In Doctrine & Covenants 64:2e God tells us, ***“I the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men; and ye ought to say in your hearts, Let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee according to thy deeds.”***

Hallelujah! That sets me free! I do not have to carry the burden of hurt and discouragement in my heart. Forgiveness doesn't excuse the behavior of someone else. Forgiveness prevents their behavior from destroying my heart. God always has a better way. And scripture also tells us that his way is a commandment. If we don't forgive others, he will not forgive us. In Matthew 6:16, we read, ***“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, who trespass against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses.”***

Now, who among us does not have things for which we need God to forgive? We know the answer to that as written in Romans, ***“As it is written, there is none righteous...for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...”*** Jesus taught us this vital concept as he gave his disciples instruction in how to pray: ***“And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.”*** Thus, we all need God to forgive us and we want that forgiveness on a daily basis. How can we not want to forgive others?

As with all Christ-like virtues, forgiveness must begin with us, and must begin at home. For some of us, there are deep

sorrows, things we did or did not do that haunt our very souls. Sometimes those scars involve someone else, perhaps someone who is no longer a part of our lives or even someone who has passed out of this life entirely. Is forgiveness possible in these circumstances? Are we like Sarah, Abraham's wife, who doubt what we are told? Remember the angel said to her, "***Is anything too hard for the Lord?***" (Genesis 18:13). And God himself says to Jeremiah, "***Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for me?***" So, unless God can lie, we can (and must) forgive ourselves and those who have caused us pain. It is possible. But how do we begin? I found a list of five tips for forgiving that really make good, scriptural sense. These are:

- Don't deny that you've been hurt. Forgiving isn't denying.
- Make a decision to forgive others. (Luke 17:3-5)
- Don't seek revenge or repay evil for evil. Let God handle it. (1 Peter 3:9)
- Pray the Lord will release any anger inside of you. (Ephesians 4:26-27, 31)
- Pray for those who have hurt you. (Matthew 5:45-50)

From this, we can see a process, one that allows us to **acknowledge** the hurt and anguish, to then, through the gift of agency, **decide** to forgive. (It doesn't just come naturally!) From that point, we **relinquish** our right to seek revenge and we **pray** for two important things: that God will heal us inside and that we can leave those who have hurt us in his hands, for he will bless and punish as he, in his omnipotent power, knows best. It is no longer for us to decide what should happen to them.

All of this is very important to our eternal salvation. Alma states, in Mosiah 11:140, "***And ye shall also forgive one another your trespasses: for verily I say unto you, He that forgiveth not his neighbor's trespasses, when he says that he repents, the same hath brought himself under condemnation.***" Now I am certain that none of us want to live under condemnation. We, however, in our human frailty, must realize that this is not something we can do

on our own. We have to remember that fourth step, asking God to help us overcome hurt and anger. It may not leave us all at once, nor for all time. And at those times, when we feel our weakness overriding our best intentions, we must call upon our heavenly Father for his strength and his peace. He will not forsake us.

It has been said that those whom we love best can hurt us most deeply. There is truth in this concept, and because of this, the hurt and pains inflicted in our homes are often hardest to forgive. The best strategy, of course, is to act quickly to communicate the hurt and seek to resolve it with your loved ones. One wise man has said we should forgive others as quickly as we want God to forgive us.

In our homes, we live closely together, yet we are individuals. We do not know anyone else's thoughts, no matter how much we love them. Therefore, in our homes, we must expect to have "give and take." We should view forgiving and compromising as strengths, not weaknesses. In order for a marriage to continue and grow strong, it must flow in forgiveness, even if it is only the forgiveness you offer to your spouse for not being exactly what you think (or thought) he would be.

However, our pride or our fear or our natural inclinations to want to keep things peaceful may prevent honest, open communication. Then problems build up and become overpowering. This is when we most need God's love and power and direction. We have to lay all things at his feet, and perhaps wait until he opens a way to improve the situation. When this is the case, our focus needs to be on the change God can bring into our own lives, rather than begging him to change a loved one. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, "***He hath made everything beautiful in his time...***" When we need the power of forgiveness for deep, long suffering, we will need to fully rely on God, and pray for *his time*.

Families include our children, and also our brothers, sisters, parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. I will come back to the children, but let's look at those relationships with the extended family. I know of a situation where a daughter-in-law lashed out at her husband's parents while he was serving a tour of military duty out of the country. The parents were deeply hurt, but instead of

seeking understanding and working to forgive, they allowed the wound to fester, until, when their son returned home, the entire family ended up not speaking to each other...for ten years! During that time, the grandmother of the son (and mother of the father-in-law) was literally torn because she loved them all and wanted her family to be reunited. She, however, could not bring about the change that needed to occur. But she could pray and go on loving everyone, which she faithfully did. Eventually, before her death and in her home, reconciliation did come about, but what a waste of years in that family's life and happiness! Forgiveness is the oil of a loving family, no matter how far-flung they become. Whether we view our position as the wounded or the perpetrator, we must keep forgiveness in place.

Now, to finish with our precious children. When they are little, they need to be carefully taught in all things. As soon as they can learn to say, "please and thank you," as soon as they begin to understand "mine and not mine," it is time to teach them, "I'm sorry." My own mother was on the right track. I have to cut her some slack because, at the time of the incident on that porch, I had a four-month-old baby brother in the house. She probably didn't feel she could take the time to explain everything to my sister and me. The best time to teach is a teachable moment, but it is often a good idea to lay the groundwork of concepts like forgiveness when emotions are not running high. Stories are often the best way to introduce these things. Role-playing can also be beneficial for preschoolers and younger elementary students. Talk with Sunday school teachers about touching on these subjects, too. Older elementary children and teenagers will need gentle, consistent guidance as they navigate the thorny paths of growing up. Use those teachable moments that come up when their friends fail them or when they have to keep going when life seems unfair. By all means, set the example in your homes so that they can see and hear the process of forgiveness at work. We teach most by the lives we live.

If I could go back and stand on that porch again, and have my mother give a little more explanation, I'd like to think I could have said, "I forgive you," and have meant it. I know that my

sister and I have remained good friends through the ensuing sixty-plus years, so I feel healing happened in spite of myself. However, we cannot change the past; we can only live going forward. Forgiveness does not change the past, but it *does* enlarge the future. Praise God for his wonderful plan!

***Other scriptures to consider:***

- Matthew 18:21-22
- Luke 6:37
- Luke 17:3-4
- Ephesians 4:32
- Colossians 3:13
- D&C R160:1

**Questions:**

1. What is the five-step process to accomplish forgiving?
2. Which of these steps do you consider the hardest to do? Why?
3. Do you feel that once you have forgiven someone, you will never feel the pain of hurt again? Explain your answer.
4. Read all of D&C 64:2. How does this scripture capsule the need for and the process of forgiveness?
5. What is the best new understanding you now have about forgiveness?
6. Read and ponder this quote from Corrie Ten Boom: *“Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.”* Explain the truth that is in this statement.

***Further Reading:***

- Additional recommended reading: *The Hiding Place* by Corrie Ten Boom
- Mormonhub.com has a list of books for children on the topic of forgiveness, listed by age groups. These books are from a wide variety of children’s authors and are available at local bookstores.

Written by Ardyce Nordeen

## **Worship** **Attribute of Gratitude**

Scripture: I Thessalonians 5:18

Hymn: #493 “Let All Things Now Living” or #496 “From Mountain Heights”

Sally went to church one Sunday morning and winced when she heard the organist miss a note during the prelude. She

noted a teenager was whispering during the invocation. She felt the deacons were scrutinizing what each person contributed in the offering plate. She could not help but notice that several blooms in the arrangement on the rostrum were wilting. She counted at least five grammatical errors made by the minister in his sermon, not to mention the two spelling errors she spotted in the order of service. She was bothered by the organist's loud postlude at the end of the service. As she left the church immediately after the service, she thought, "What a careless group of people!"

Mary went to church one Sunday morning and was touched by hearing a teenager, who usually did not participate, read a scripture during the opening worship before Sunday School. She was thankful to see a dear sister recovering from surgery in attendance. She was thrilled when a group of young children enthusiastically sang "This Little Light of Mine" for the ministry of music. She was encouraged to see a shy, young deacon help collect the offering. She was grateful when the minister's sermon helped her answer a question that had bothered her for some time. She felt radiant joy as the organist began playing "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning" for the majestic postlude. After visiting with several people, she left the church thinking, "What a wonderful group of people with whom to share in worship!"

As you may have guessed, Sally and Mary went to the same church, on the same Sunday morning. The difference? Attitude! Mary chose an attitude of gratitude for the blessings she observed at church. It is not always easy to be thankful, and we may even need to challenge ourselves to consciously choose gratitude. Before rising in the morning, thank God for several blessings in your life. Throughout the day, recognize and vocalize gratitude for acts of kindness and positive traits observed in others. At night, offer a prayer of thanksgiving for challenges experienced during the day. Over time, this attitude of gratitude will become a part of daily living. Expressing gratitude is pleasing to God. We

are admonished throughout the Scriptures to give thanks to the Lord in all things:

***“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him, and bless his name”*** (Psalm 100:4).

***“And they did admonish their brethren; and they were also admonished...being commanded of God to pray without ceasing, and to give thanks in all things”*** (Mosiah 11:149).

***“Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things”*** (Doctrine & Covenants 59:2d).

***“...Fear not, let your hearts be comforted, yea, rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks, waiting patiently on the Lord;”*** (Doctrine & Covenants 95:1a).

Written by Pat Walsh

## **Study Guide Attribute of Gratitude**

Psalm 105:1-5 reads, ***“Oh give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him; talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name; let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord, and his strength; seek his face evermore. Remember his marvelous works that he hath done; his wonders and the judgments of his mouth.”***

How interesting that I was asked to write on this topic since I was given a book recently titled, *A Simple Act of Gratitude* by John Kralik. The author discovered how learning to say “thank you” changed his life. This author was at the lowest point in his life when he heard a voice tell him, “Until you learn to be grateful for the things you have, you will not receive the things you want.”

Gratitude is our emotion which relates to our ability to feel and express thankfulness and appreciation. “Real gratitude begins, not when life is peaceful and serene, but when everything’s falling apart and the resulting anxiety is enough to drive you right through your eyeballs. For anxious people, being grateful to God is a miracle. Simple gratitude helps us experience God at work in every moment of every day” (Harriet Crosby, *A Place Called Home*).

We, as humans, find it difficult to be in a constant state of thankfulness. On most mornings when I have the luxury of lying in bed for a few minutes before starting the day, I try to pray over the day ahead. Usually it is for the safety of my family, friends who have needs, health concerns, those who I will deal with during the day, strength and discernment over decisions that will be made, guidance, and thankfulness for the blessings that will be mine during the day ahead...especially the surprises God has in mind!

It never ceases to amaze me when I am feeling rushed or overwhelmed by what needs to be done that somehow the Lord will “work out the details of the day” to the point that I have to shake my head and smile at his goodness and the surety that if I but surrender my daily life and its needs and problems to him, everything will find a way of working itself out. And usually the Lord’s way of working things out is so much better than mine. Let **him** be in charge! The Lord’s Prayer tells us to let “**thy will be done.**” Lead us, Lord, for your wisdom and mercy are so much better than ours.

I was preparing for a prayer service recently and thinking about the day and previous days. There did not seem to be an experience or testimony that I could point to that I thought would be a good testimony for that service. Then I remembered the truck which pulled out in front of me and we did not collide, the clerk

who had been so helpful, and the fact that I was feeling so much more energized than I had for many weeks. Those very small blessings that could go unnoticed as blessings are what I have heard people refer to as “God winks,” his way of letting us know that he has sent his angels to be with us and to help us every moment. When we are able to have an “attitude of gratitude” for even these very smallest blessings, and truly recognize them as blessings and not just coincidences, then we are developing that “attribute of gratitude.”

Dr. Randy Kamen researched this topic and wrote an article for the Huffington Post titled, *The Transformative Power of Gratitude*. He listed some of the benefits of gratitude as these:

- Improved physical, emotional, and social well-being;
- Increased self-esteem;
- Heightened energy levels;
- Strengthened heart, immune system, and decreased blood pressure;
- Expanded capacity for forgiveness;
- Decreased stress, anxiety, depression, and headaches;
- Heightened spirituality – ability to see something bigger than ourselves;
- Greater optimism and happiness;
- Less materialistic and self-centered;
- Improved feelings of connection in times of loss or crises.

Is there anything negative to come from a heart of gratitude? Are these “life improvements” worthwhile?

One example this author gave was that when he was a child, a silver dollar was quite a large amount of money. His grandfather gave him a silver dollar as a gift and told him that if he would write a thank you note, he would send him another one. That worked great the first time; he sent the note and received another silver dollar. But the lesson was lost, or the incentive neglected, when he failed to write the thank you for the second silver dollar and never received the third. I wonder how disappointed the grandfather must have felt. How often are we

disappointed when our children, grandchildren, spouse, or friend, fails to adequately thank us for a gift. Now consider how our heavenly Father must feel when we, his children, live our lives in an ungrateful fashion. He continues to bless us and support us, but how much more we would receive if our thoughts and lives were in constant gratitude for everything that happens to us. Simple gratitude helps us experience God at work in every moment of every day.

In September of 2013, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I had been a healthy, active person with no major health issues and here I was with this terrifying disease facing me. It was truly hard to feel gratitude. My mind went more to, “Why me?” “What did I do wrong?” It was hard to not fixate on the new limitations and loss of freedom. Some days it was hard to not have a “pity party.” I tried to imagine what could possibly be positive about this experience. Now, several years later and cancer free, I can see that I have much more empathy and concern for those who are struggling with health issues and can relate to the emotional needs of those who have lost hope or feel like this burden is too much to bear. Was it to draw me closer to him? Was it to strengthen my faith? The one outstanding memory from my experience was that I went through my computer address book and made a group of those people that I thought would sincerely pray on my behalf. I boldly asked for prayers and when there was a positive experience with my treatment or a testimony, I shared the news with this prayer warrior group. It is easier to cope when you feel the love and prayers of faithful saints. You feel like the Lord truly is concerned about you and your every need and when you are recognizing his goodness that will encourage others to look for the blessings. Ephesians 5:20 reads, ***“Give thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

The author of *A Simple Act of Gratitude*, which I referred to earlier, set about getting his personal life in order by planning to write 365 “thank you” notes. Sometimes it was two or three in one day or just one a day, but it was a year of writing “thank you” notes to those who touched his life in different ways. He thanked

his children, his parents, brothers, sisters, in-laws, office personnel, business partners and business foes, doctors, dentists, teachers, clients, people who waited on him, those who fixed things for him, cleaned his home, watched his animal, those who gave gifts for holidays and birthdays, neighbors, and anyone who he could be grateful to or for with the large or small blessings that touched his life. It took eighteen months, but he was a changed man and his life had been transformed.

I would challenge you to get a box of note cards or a stack of paper and begin your own journey into gratitude by starting your project of writing a thank you note every day to someone who has touched your life. It will start you looking more for those positive people and experiences that may otherwise go unnoticed. It will change your attitude and you will develop that “attribute of gratitude.” You will begin to thank God for the good in your life, even if it seems that it is otherwise chaotic or unbalanced or not what you want it to be. Another idea is to keep a “gratitude journal.” Record at least three positive experiences on a daily basis. By recording these experiences, your level of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, attentiveness and energy will raise.

So, what are some of the characteristics of a grateful heart? According to Rosalind Tompkins’ *Life Lessons*, these are five characteristics:

- the attribute of gratitude as opposed to a spirit of entitlement;
- seeing the good and positive in life and focusing on that;
- tuning out negative thoughts inside your head;
- celebrating God, life, and people – not just things;
- being thankful for the good times, happy times, and sad times because we learn from them all that gratefulness is a catalyst to all Christ-like attributes.

Appreciation is an affirmation of goodness and sources of goodness outside of ourselves. Gratefulness is key to a happy life. If we are not grateful, then no matter how much we have, we will not be happy. Gratitude is no cure-all, but it is a massively underutilized tool for improving life satisfaction and happiness. Shifting our focus from what may be lacking in our life to the

abundance that already exists retrains our brain to see the possibilities which lie ahead each day.

So, what are you grateful for today?

Thanks to God for my Redeemer,  
Thanks for all Thou dost provide!  
Thanks for times now but a memory,  
Thanks for Jesus by my side!  
Thanks for pleasant, balmy springtime,  
Thanks for dark and dreary fall!  
Thanks for tears by now forgotten,  
Thanks for peace within my soul!

Thanks for prayers that Thou hast answered,  
Thanks for what Thou dost deny!  
Thanks for storms that I have weathered.  
Thanks for all Thou dost supply!  
Thanks for pain and thanks for pleasure,  
Thanks for comfort in despair!  
Thanks for grace that none can measure,  
Thanks for love beyond compare!

Thanks for roses by the wayside,  
Thanks for thorns their stems contain!  
Thanks for home and thanks for fireside,  
Thanks for hope, that sweet refrain!  
Thanks for joy and thanks for sorrow  
Thanks for heav'nly peace with Thee!  
Thanks for hope in the tomorrow,  
Thanks through all eternity!

August Ludwig Storm (1862-1914)

### Questions:

1. How do we nurture and develop this attribute of gratitude?

2. Are our homes, lives, and thoughts full of “thanksgiving” as shown in our “thanks living?”
3. Do we daily practice being thankful? Do we encourage our families?
4. How can we be thankful in all things?
5. Can you suggest ways to cultivate this sense of appreciation?
6. Would practicing not gossiping, complaining, or judging for a day be a good gratitude exercise? Why?
7. How would thinking about what you are grateful for each morning change your life?

Written by Beckie Hogan

## **Worship** **Always Abounding in Good Works**

Scripture: Doctrine & Covenants R162: 9

Hymn: #14 “Earnest Workers for the Master”

"Good works" may not always be "good works"; it depends on the motive. A certain politician was instrumental in getting several streets paved in his constituents' neighborhood. The people

were very happy with the improvements and believed he did it from a genuine concern for their welfare. Unfortunately for him, the truth was later revealed and his hidden motives exposed. He had received a huge bribe from the company contracted to do the work. Currying favor with the voters for a re-election bid was the other motive. All was done to benefit himself. Doing something "good" for the wrong reason will condemn us in God's eyes. Although the people benefited, the politician received no gold stars. We may even fool ourselves sometimes if we are not mindful, but God knows our hearts and will never be deceived.

Good works spoken of in the Scriptures come from a compassionate, loving heart, expecting nothing in return. The parable Jesus told of the good Samaritan was to demonstrate what a true neighbor is, but it is also a perfect example of "abounding in good works." The Jews and Samaritans traditionally did not associate with each other, but this man was caring and compassionate and bound up the Jewish man's wounds, put him on his own donkey and took him to an inn for food, shelter and recuperation. He even offered to pay more upon his return if extra cost was incurred. All this was done for a perfect stranger with no return favor expected. When we stay close to Jesus, our "good works" will be a reflection of his abounding love in our lives.

Written by Connie Derr

## **Study Guide**

### **Always Abounding in Good Works**

***“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... Continue to seek out those avenues of opportunity to serve me in those ways that are granted to you, my handmaidens.”*** (D&C R157:5a).

My mother passed away in May of 2012 after a three-and-a-half-year battle with dementia. Mom and I were very close. Widowed at the age of forty-eight, she devoted her time to my

brother and me and our families. Her slow, three-and-a-half-year disappearance from my life (compliments of her dementia) had taken a toll on my emotions. During the last months of Mom's life, our youngest daughter remarried. Her new husband was a career Navy man who was stationed in Hawaii. While this was an answer to our prayers for our daughter's happiness, it meant that she and her son, our youngest grandson, would be spending the next three years a twelve-hour flight away from us. My husband and I had become very active in our grandson's life after the death of his father six years earlier. Needless to say, her joy was another blow to my emotional state. I was quickly sinking into a state of depression.

God's blessing came to me in the form of a young woman our daughter had befriended. The single, twenty-year-old was pregnant and had no one to turn to other than our daughter who was getting on a plane bound for Hawaii the day after the young woman's baby was born. This new life and his mommy were placed in my path as an opportunity to serve our Lord and be blessed in my time of need. Over the next three years, we helped her find a place for her new little family to live, helped her buy a car so she could get to work, and babysat while she worked. We also assisted her in reconnecting with her own mother who was now in a place to be the support her daughter and grandson needed. We continue to keep in contact, but rest peacefully in the thought that God brought us together during a season of need in both of our lives.

As I look back at my life, I am so thankful for all of the opportunities God gave me to serve. After my retirement from full-time teaching, I became a homebound instructor for our school district. I was taking this job as a means to make a little money to supplement my new "fixed income" status, but God had a different plan! Many of the families that I have met were in some sort of need. While I am not equipped to meet all of those needs, my heavenly Father leads me to the answers. One young family was facing an immediate health crisis and in need of some "quick cash" for a two-hour trip for their son's impending surgery. I shared this need with our small congregation and walked out with a very large

donation that covered their expenses and left enough for them to purchase a couch! This family of four had beds for the children and mom, a kitchen table, and one chair. The couch gave the dad a much-needed place to sleep.

Another teaching assignment took me to our local youth shelter. This organization is operated by some very caring people, but like many similar agencies, the financial need is great. Some members of my extended family were looking for a place to support long-term. Once again God offered up a chance for me to connect a need with some folks who wanted to offer help. Their association is positive and ongoing. This teaching assignment also gave my husband and myself an opportunity to be “foster grandparents” to a young man who needed to know that there are people in the world that can be trusted when he needs someone to turn to for help. He has enjoyed developing healthy relationships with my grandchildren who are serving as positive role models for making better choices as he navigates difficult teen years.

I spent my years as a young/middle-aged Christian woman serving by working in women’s groups, teaching Sunday school, and working at reunion and youth camps. I even put in time as camp cook. I was limiting my service to the Lord to the safe confines of my church family. It required faith in the unlimited power of God to seek out those in need, trusting that if a need is found, he will provide a solution. When we stand in a circle facing inward, we see the safe, friendly faces of our Christian companions. But if we turn around, looking outward into the world where God has placed us, it is easy to find those places where we are called to be his hands and heart.

Get started finding service opportunities:

- Look outward. See what is going on in the spot God has placed you.
- Be resourceful, don’t use your limitations as an excuse; ask the Lord to lead you to the needs of His people and the resources you might utilize.
- Leave your comfort zone. Feel safe in the presence of the Lord on your service journey.

- Generate a service “Bucket List.” Make a list of five needs for service in the place God has seen fit to place you.

It is my prayer that your opportunity for service will come with unexpected blessings!

### Questions:

1. Name three areas of service you have done in the past.
2. Name three benefits of serving others?
3. Think about your “Bucket List” of service projects. Name at least one service you want to do next week, next month, and for all of next year.
4. What is holding you back from the service you would like to give? Why and how will you overcome this?

Written by Barbara Byrne

## Worship Studying His Word

Scripture: Matthew 25:36-41

Hymn #163 “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”

Why did God leave us one tale after another of wounded lives being restored? These stories in the Scriptures are of hope like the woman accused of sin (John 8:11), and Lazarus dying and arising to life again, “... *Loose him and let him go*” (John 11:44).

Why? So that we could look back with amazement at the things Jesus did? I would say, “No.” The purpose of the tales and stories are not to tell us of what our Savior did in his life, nor in the lives of others. The true purpose of the stories of the Scriptures are to help us understand what Jesus does. It is written there to teach us (Romans 15:4-6). It is where God, our Savior, saw and met us in our pain and suffering. It is so we can or could see “where God is when good people hurt and need help,” the word becoming effective in our lives.

On my way home from working at the hospital all day, I was approached by an individual at the time clock. Asking only for coins or anything I could give this individual who was in need. There were many other workers passing around me to clock out. I knew I was going to a warm and loving home, with food on the table. PERHAPS NOT SO FOR THIS PERSON. We have all seen individuals like this, in need of a shave or haircut, lacking the proper clothing needed to keep warm on a cold night. Questions came: “What’s your name?”, “When was your last meal?”, “Do you have family to support?” and so on. As I talked with this person, more questions came as we walked down the halls to the cafeteria. Talking with the dietitian of his need, we paid for several meals and had them wrapped up to go. We also lined up a bus pass for several weeks.

As I sat that night and ate with my family, in a warm and loving home, around the table that evening, I was thankful to God for what my family had. I know God sees people in their time of hurting and needing for help. Where is our God but within us, becoming our spirit of a smiling face to help the wounded lives be restored, knowing that all Jesus asks of us to do is to help one another and to give a hand to help those in need. When we give to them what they need, we are giving to him who gave to us.

Written by Linda Evans

## **Study Guide**

### **Studying His Word**

In Doctrine & Covenants R162, given to the church through prophet and president, Frederick N. Larsen, we are admonished to ***“read, study, obey.”*** In Doctrine & Covenants 83:7a, it states to, ***“...live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.”***

Why is it so important to study? In the age we live in, it is becoming increasingly clear just why we are told to study. We live in a time when it is becoming harder and harder to discern what is true and what is not. We are bombarded by so called “fake news.” “Photo shopping” has become so advanced that now even the

experts are unable to tell if a photo has been altered. Technology can also replicate a person's voice to the point where it's impossible to tell the difference between a digital voice and a real one. We *must* cling more tightly than ever to the word of God, our precious Scriptures. Mark 13 and Matthew 24 tell us that ***"...they shall deceive the very elect, who are the elect according to the covenant."*** This, to some extent, applied to the time right after Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD, but is undoubtedly applicable to our own time as well.

So, where do we begin with our studies? As believers in the Restoration gospel, we are blessed with more scriptures than the other Christian denominations. That means we have a lot more studying to do! Don't forget the scripture, ***"...for unto whom much is given, much is required..."*** (D&C 81:1c). This applies to many things, including knowing the Scriptures!

Let's start with the Bible. Again, we are blessed with the Inspired Version which contains additional information about many things, including such important topics as the city of Enoch. How sad that other denominations know so little about Enoch and his holy city! The Bible can be a difficult study by oneself. I once tried to wade through Ezekiel by myself. After reading verse after verse about wings and faces and wheels, all going in different directions, I gave up! For most of us, the Bible requires a good commentary. There are dozens to choose from. Matthew Henry's Commentary is probably the most well-known, but there are countless others. Along with commentaries, there are countless study guides, many written by our own Restoration people. Christiana Salyard's book *Men Nearest the Master* is an excellent study of Peter, James, and John. It uses both their own words from scripture and known historical facts about them. The best way to study the Bible is probably in a study group rather than tackling it by oneself. Breaking the Bible into sections makes it less overwhelming. Try dividing it into the New Testament, the major or minor prophets, Psalms or the Pentateuch (first five books of the Old Testament). There has been so much written to help us better understand the Bible that one lifetime of study won't even make a

dent. Just be sure that you choose wisely. Not everything written is of value.

Studying the Book of Mormon can be approached in a different way from the Bible. The Book of Mormon is plainer and simpler to understand. Many people simply read it from cover to cover, often many times over. If this works for you, great! There are good companion books and study guides too. Of course, these are all written by Restoration folks including many from our Utah cousins in the LDS Church. Roy Weldon and F. Edward Butterworth's books, *Book of Mormon Deeps*, Volume I and II are very good and a popular choice. For the really serious scholar, I suggest looking into the writings of Hugh Nibley. He was a LDS Book of Mormon scholar with a doctorate degree in middle eastern studies. His books are thick and deep, not for the faint of heart. But if you are up to it, his books are worth the read. They are full of interesting historical facts that give valuable insights into the background of Lehi and his family and their roots from the land of Jerusalem.

The Doctrine & Covenants comes from a different perspective. I love this book because it speaks directly to us today. Granted, there's a lot of 'who was ordained to what office' and 'who was chastised for disobedience', but there are some amazingly deep insights and instruction from the Lord. Don't make the mistake of overlooking its importance. It's more a heavy hitter than some may realize. The Doctrine & Covenants too has commentaries that are helpful. One is F. Henry Edwards, *Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*. This book explains what was happening in the lives of early church members when these revelations were given. Without an explanation, it will be sometimes difficult to understand the full meaning of our early revelations.

Along with studying the Scriptures, please consider reading some of the many books out there about our church history. Of course, one can always read official church history, but it can be a heavy road for anyone except the really dedicated reader. Books with personal stories provide more information than just basic

facts. There are so many to choose from, so just find the ones that interest you. No one will ever get them all read in one lifetime.

Keep in mind, a good concordance is a great asset and friend on your study journey. There are several good ones. My favorite is one put together by Arthur E. Starks. It combines all three standard books. I've almost always been able to find anything I was looking for in his book.

Probably, though, the most important assistance tool we have in our studies is to first ask the Lord for guidance. A good habit to form before every study session is to ask him for greater understanding and clarity in your studies. The Lord once impressed on me to read the book of Jeremiah. I had read it before and didn't care for it. It seemed rather depressing (actually a lot of the Old Testament can be). But, I did as I was prompted. I was close to the end when something outside the Scriptures raised a question in my mind. Two or three days later, as I reading in Jeremiah, the answer was there. It was perfect timing. I would never have found the answer otherwise. Listen to the Lord's promptings.

If you are a parent or grandparent, you probably already know how important it is that children are taught the Scriptures and the Restoration gospel story. It doesn't come through osmosis! They must be given a strong foundation and that always begins in the home. It is probably the most important aspect of a Zion home. Children are not going to get all the instruction they require in a Sunday school class once a week. As a Sunday school teacher, myself, I know how woefully short that forty-five-minute class can be! Children who are getting limited instruction at home may be destined to drift away and leave the church by the time they are out of school. They have no anchor to keep them moored to the gospel. Forty-five minutes once a week probably will not give the child that spiritual anchor they will need. It's hard enough to keep our children on the right path in today's world when they have a solid foundation in the gospel. The adversary uses every trick to destroy our children. One of those tricks is encouraging families (and individuals) to be so involved in the world that they have no time for study or church related activities. This is one of the most powerful and successful tools that Satan uses against us. Those

without a strong foundation have little or no chance of surviving Satan's traps. A family altar is imperative for a Zionite home. It offers an opportunity to study the Scriptures together as a family. Be sure it's a daily habit. It's never too early to start teaching a child the gospel. Almost all of our Remnant and Restoration families have suffered because our children and grandchildren have drifted away or left the church. We must be extra diligent in teaching the children.

In finishing up, don't fall into the trap of thinking that just studying the Scriptures is the "be all and end all." It's not! Studying the Scriptures is part of the path that leads us to the end game: having a relationship with God. Knowing what's in the Scriptures helps us to understand his ways better and come closer to him. That only happens, though, when our focus is on him first and foremost.

In the days when Christ walked on earth as a man, the Pharisees were scholars of their scriptures. They spent their entire lives studying and knew those scriptures backwards and forwards. Yet, they didn't recognize their Messiah when he stood in their midst. Why? Because they were so focused on the "letter of the law," they completely missed the "spirit of the law." In so doing, they denied their Savior. I went to high school and attended and RLDS congregation with a young man who was two years younger. He came from a well-respected church family who was deeply involved in church activities. He seemed to have a solid foundation in the Restoration gospel. As an adult, he became a knowledgeable scholar of the Book of Mormon. He taught classes and many in the church were impressed by his understanding of the Scriptures. He developed a small following of those who esteemed him. When the break up began in the RLDS church, he and his followers moved to another state. From there, they fell into great apostasy. Like the Pharisees, he too, knew the Scriptures well. But he didn't really know the Lord. Apparently, he was so focused on being an expert of the Scriptures that he never had a real relationship with his Savior. Bear in mind that Doctrine & Covenants R163 tells us to "**Read. Study, Obey.**" Without the third part, read and study can become meaningless and empty. We must

incorporate all three into our lives in order to move close to the Lord and become as he is; perfect in thought and deed. May the Lord bless you in your endeavors to move closer to him every day until that time when we meet him face to face. What a glorious time that will be!

**Scripture reference:** II Timothy 2:15, Deut. 6:6-7, Psalms 119:15, III Nephi 10:21, D&C 9:3, D&C 10:10c-d, and D&C 85:36a.

### **Questions:**

1. Do you have a study plan or regimen that works for you?
2. Do you prefer to study alone or in a group (or both)? Why?
3. Has the Lord ever prompted you to read something that turned out to answer a question or perhaps give some encouragement? Please share the experience.
4. What are some of your favorite scriptures that speak to you the most?
5. What additional books or commentaries have been helpful in your study?
6. Have you had any experiences teaching either adults or children that have benefited you? Please share your experiences.

Written by Marylyn Gosling

## **Worship Family Prayer Life**

Scripture: Alma 16:181

Hymn: #51 “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!”

The Scriptures are filled with encouragement and admonition to pray. We know it is significant when God mentions it so often. It is important because prayer is our communication with our heavenly Father. Imagine what you would miss without talking to your family, friends or children. Their lives would grow distant and unfamiliar to you. Conversing is necessary to your relationship. The same is true of our special bond with our Father

in heaven. We tell him our worries, needs and desires. We send our praise and thanks for his goodness, mercy and everlasting love.

I was uncertain what praise and adoration actually meant in a worship setting, but when studying it, I realized it was really lacking in my worship. I found inspiration in many hymns, especially hymn 51, of the praise and honor due to our Father and Creator.

Try using this acronym to remember these elements in your prayer:

**P: Praise**

Honor and praise are due him for he is holy above all, creator of all we see and all that is unseen.

**R: Repent**

We all fall short of perfection; therefore, there is always much to repent from.

**A: Ask**

This is probably the part we do best, petitioning God for our families and friends. Praying for others is just as important as praying for ourselves.

**Y: Yield**

Surrender yourself to his will. Listen for the still, small voice that will guide you in your daily walk.

Written by Dan Keleher

## **Study Guide**

### **Family Prayer Life**

Family prayer may be one of the most important things that we can do daily in order to become a sanctified people. When we learn to pray in our families, our family units can become strongholds in Zion.

Yet, there often seem to be many obstacles that stand in the way of effective family prayer. It takes effort to gather family members together at one time and in the correct attitude for being in God's presence. Sadly, sometimes we may find ourselves unwilling to make that effort.

Families with small children find themselves trying to struggle with active, easily distracted little ones. Parents with teens find their children off and running with little patience for family

time. Empty-nesters often fall into a, “Well, after all, it is just the two of us” mentality when it comes to home prayer. Single people may not even see themselves as part of a family, forgetting that they have extended family or a church family that they can pray with. But these reasons and excuses are really just that: excuses. These excuses deprive us of the greater blessings we could have as a family if we would take the time to pray together regularly. Doing so can bring us closer to each other and to the Lord.

Most of us have probably heard the term “dysfunctional” pointing at families who are struggling. But the truth is that, without the Lord’s intervention through faithful prayer, all families are in danger of failing to function in the manner designed by God. This has been true from the very beginning. It was only through faith and prayer that many of the servants of God, down through time, could overcome the dysfunctional aspects of their family life and thus fulfill the measure of their creation and raise a family in righteousness. Adam and Eve must have been overwhelmed at times with raising the first family on earth. Their hearts must have ached when Cain turned on Abel. Their only help was the Lord. When Adam and his family did turn to the Lord, Adam received guidance for his family and was given direction and commandments needed to stay in tune with the Father (read Genesis 4:4-5). Adam and Eve blessed the Lord and taught their children in Genesis 4:12. Noah built an altar after the flood and prayed a prayer of thanksgiving and supplication that the curse would be taken from the earth. He prayed with his sons and was promised great blessings (read Genesis 9:4-8). The prayers of older people in families can be of great value and power. Abraham was ninety years old before he fell upon his face to the Lord and thus received instructions for his people/family (read Genesis 17:1-8). In the next four chapters of Genesis, we see that Abraham and his family were blessed many times in answer to that initial prayer as have all generations since. Isaac also prayed for his family often. In Genesis 25:21 we read: ***“And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, that she might bare children, because she was barren. And the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife, conceived.”***

Faithful family prayer continued throughout the Old Testament and then into the New Testament. Because of the traditions of faith passed on through the lineage of David, Jesus must have grown up in a home where family prayer would have been considered very important and observed regularly. And of course, we all are familiar with the instructions Christ gave to us in what we call the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-11).

Father Lehi prayed fervently for his family and in III Nephi 8:52, the visiting Savior admonished the people to, ***“Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed.”***

Joseph Smith Jr. took this counsel from the Lord seriously as he and his family often prayed together. These are the words of William Holmes Walker, an early Church member, from his diary, *“My Father sent me to Nauvoo on some business with the Prophet. I arrived at his house just as his family was singing, before the accustomed prayer. His wife, Emma, was leading the singing. I thought I had never heard such sweet, heavenly music before. I was equally interested in the prayer offered by the Prophet.”*

All of these people of God knew that the adversary wants nothing more than to destroy our homes and families. He will do all that he can to keep us from becoming a strong unit through the avenue of prayer. Knowing this we must be asking ourselves who is winning in our homes: *prayer or the adversary?*

Hopefully prayer is winning in our homes. We should never underestimate the influence prayer will have on our families. It is a great teacher and offers our children a wonderful sense of security. When I was a young girl, I never felt more secure and happy than when our family prayed together. I can recall even as a four-year-old seeing my mother and father standing with their arms about each other as they prayed in our living room. I was too young to know why they were praying, but I do recall an absolute feeling of love, trust, and safety as I hugged their legs, bowed my head, and listened. As a teenager, I recall heartfelt prayers given by my father at the dinner table that always ended with the following words; “Nonetheless, thy will be done, Lord, in Jesus name. Amen.” These prayers, and my father's attitude of full submission

to God's will, were nearly palpable and the feelings that I felt at that time have remained with me. I also recall tender prayers offered by my mother as she and my father tucked my sisters and me into bed at night. Those moments of intimate family prayer were spirit-filled and most likely were more influential in shaping my desire to try my best to be faithful than any of my other childhood memories.

Family prayer can be as natural as breathing in our homes. It need not always be formal or planned. In fact, I believe that it is actually better when not overly planned. The key is to get our homes and our spirits in tune with our heavenly Father. When we stop to remind our families about how much God loves them, they will naturally desire to take their hearts to him in prayer at all possible times. It can be spontaneous and natural simply as a result of wanting to share our lives with him. We can pray at all times, whether in times of rejoicing and gratitude, or in times of challenge and trouble.

Pray when your family is happy and calm, or when they are in need of protection, healing or guidance. Stop and pray together when you hear of a friend in need or when a child skins their knee. Pray when you see a need for repentance or reconciliation related to others, either at home, school, work or church. Pray for patience and tolerance between family members. Pray for sharp minds at school, and caring hearts at work. Parents pray for children and children pray for your parents. Wives pray for your husbands and husbands for your wives. And when you do this, pray for greater understanding of each other's needs and how to help meet those needs.

### **Three Fundamentals of Family Prayer**

**1-Feel** - Feel the need to pray together as a family.

**2-Fill** - Fill your home with a peaceful, prayerful environment and your hearts with family love and faith.

**3-Fulfill** - Fulfill the purpose for family prayer, which is to bring your family closer to the Lord.

*“...draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you...”* D&C 85:16b.

While family prayer time does not have to be overly planned, it still could be helpful to have a routine that fits easily into your family’s time at home. Praying at dinner or at bedtime may be a good time to discuss and then address the needs and problems faced that day in prayer. Praying in the morning can help focus our minds and hearts helping our families to make the days more productive. Just like individual prayer; however, *anytime* you are together can be a good time for family prayer. Some families like to set aside one evening a week to have special prayer and study together.

Below are some suggestions or guidelines for family prayer that may be helpful, keeping in mind these are just a help for you to turn to if needed. The Lord wants to hear from the sincerity of your hearts, no matter how or when your family chooses to pray. Please, don’t quench the Spirit by overly clinging to a checklist.

### **Building Blocks of Preparing for Family Prayer**

1-Encourage family members to listen to one another so that there is an awareness of what needs to be taken to the Lord during family prayer. Teens may especially need listening ears and have serious issues to address.

2-Create a peaceful environment in your homes so that distractions will not get in the way of communing with the Lord. Turn off electronic devices and phones. Singing hymns may set the tone at times. All ages may respond well to favorite campfire hymns.

3- Try not to pray when in a rush so that the full attention can be on the family’s exchange with the Lord. Or if you do pray when in

a hurry, try to focus on the prayer and not on where you need to be next.

4- Encourage children and/or adults to reconcile problems and quibbles prior to prayer so that bad feelings will not interfere with the spirit of unity at prayer time. Then allow the prayer to further heal the situations.

5-Suggestion for young families: make a prayer board with colorful pictures depicting the prayer topics such as, thank-you, sorry, God bless someone, God make someone better, etc., and let the children choose topics each time you have a family prayer. Encourage, but don't force children to pray; let them warm up to it. They will eventually want to do what the others are doing just because it is meaningful to the rest of the family.



6-It may help to review the Lord's Prayer and its format with the family and use it as a guideline. For example:

a-Let God know how much you love and honor him and want him to be at the head of your household.

Let him know that your family wants to be a part of his kingdom and that you want his will to be done in your home to reflect his kingdom here on earth.

b-Thank him for all of your family blessings and seek out his provision.

c-Ask for forgiveness and reconciliation for family squabbles, failure to work together, etc.

d- Pray for guidance and for any particular challenges that family members may be facing.

e- Let God know that your family wants him to be pleased with their actions and ask him for help in making the right choices each day.

f-Pray for others; your neighbors, friends, church leaders, the kingdom, etc. and ask him to open the way for your family to help in any way you can.

g- Give him all glory and praise and end in his name. This shows the Lord that your family puts him first.

***“.... you must take up your cross, in the which you must pray vocally before the world, as well as in secret, and in your family, and among your friends, and in all places.” D&C. 21:5a.***

**Questions:**

1. God has commanded us to pray as a family. How does obedience to this commandment help us?
2. What things get in the way of taking time for family prayer? What constitutes a family?
3. Did the early prophets pray with their families? What might have been some of the circumstances that families in the Scriptures might have faced that required God's intervention? Example-Adam's son Cain murdering his brother Abel, Abraham's wife Sarah conceiving in her older years, Joseph's forgiveness of and reconciliation with his brothers in Egypt? The early apostles who left their families frequently to share the gospel? The early Restoration families who faced many persecutions? Emma when she lost Joseph?
4. Does family prayer always need to be planned? Why or why not?
5. Why might it be important to be spontaneous at times?

6. Share some memories of prayer in your families as a child or as a parent and how these prayers influenced your life. Why might it be best to let a child be taught to pray gradually by example and gentle encouragement?
7. What are some things families can do to prepare their homes for family prayer? Are there any ideas that anyone here has used to encourage or improve their family prayer life?
8. How does the Lord's Prayer help us when used as a guideline for family prayer?
9. What things might you choose to pray for when praying with your family?
10. How does family prayer draw us closer to each other and to God? To the kingdom?

Written by Cindy Patience

## Worship

### Family Altar/Family Worship

Scripture: Alma 5:12 and 16:235

Hymn: #208 “We Know Not the Time”

It has been spoken many times that Zion will not be redeemed in the churches, but in the homes of the saints. The heart of the family unit is the oneness and beauty of kindred spirits reflecting the love of God. So, each home is a sanctuary from worldliness where the Lord is not just a welcome guest, but the King in residence.

Daniel, as a captive servant in Babylon, was unwavering in his zealous prayer life. The sound of his worship and thanksgiving carried out his open window as he knelt facing the faraway holy city of Jerusalem. It was an obvious testament to his faithfulness, for his foes quickly used it against him with Darius being tricked to pass a law against praying to God. How Daniel rose above the decadence of Babylon surrounding him is instructive for our day.

The modern family altar is a visual reminder of where our focus should be directed. We do know that we seek *“a city whose*

***builder and maker is God.***” In sharp contrast to our present nation, the kingdom of God will have been cleansed of all unrighteousness, ***“For no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence.”*** The conundrum of today is that only a few feet from the family altar is likely an electronic marvel that brings images to our eyes and often fills our minds with false teaching. Just who is the father of all lies? Are we so blinded that we fail to admit the profound influence of hour after hour of entertainment (or indoctrination)? Ponder how you would behave upon entering the throne room of the Lord. That is the atmosphere of worship we should be practicing daily in readiness for his return. Maybe we could even take a cue from Daniel and experience it morning, noon and evening.

We know not the time when He cometh,  
At even, or midnight, or morn;  
It may be at deepening twilight,  
It may be at earliest dawn.  
He bids us to watch and be ready,  
Nor suffer our lights to grow dim;  
That when He shall come, He may find us,  
All waiting and watching for Him.

Chorus:

Waiting and watching,  
Waiting and watching;  
Waiting and watching,  
Still waiting and watching for Thee. – Sarepta M.I. Henry

Written by Dan Keleher

## **Study Guide**

### **Family Altars/Family Worship**

*“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.” (D&C R154:4b).*

To discuss family altars, it is helpful to consider the following questions: What is an altar? Where should an altar be? What should an altar be or what should it contain? What should we do at our family altars? Why is it important to have a family altar? This lesson will take each of these questions as a sub-topic, developing on them further, and tying them together to lay a framework for the implementation and use of family altars in our homes.

What is an altar? In historical terms, altars have usually conformed to the following definition, found in the Merriam-Webster dictionary: *a usually raised structure or place on which sacrifices are offered or incense is burned in worship*. In today's terms, the offering of burnt sacrifice has been done away with by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Now we are called, as Paul says in Romans 12:1 ***"...that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."*** Our own lives are to be the sacrifice, and moreover, this is a "reasonable service." There is nothing heroic or grandiose about it. It is simple and straight forward, something which each and everyone one of us can and must achieve. Our family altars should be a central part of this living sacrifice, this life of holiness.

Two words in the dictionary definition jump out: incense and sacrifices. For our modern lives, consider the following transpositions. Incense is prayer, and sacrifices are consecration. The Lord has provided us with types and shadows throughout the Scriptures, and this is one of them. We are now moved away from the literal burning of incense and sacrificial offerings to living these types and shadows in our own lives through prayer and consecration of our time, talents, resources, and lives. Our family altars should incorporate prayer and consecration as two of their most important pillars.

Where should an altar be? Returning to our definition of altars, we find the phrase "raised structure." This suggests a degree of prominence, or noticeability. An altar being in or near places of corporate congregation within a home (i.e. not a bedroom or closet) keeps it not only in our minds by being visible in our everyday lives and tasks within our homes, it also displays itself for guests in our homes. This is not only of benefit to ourselves, ensuring the altar is not something that becomes forgotten in some dark corner, but it can provide a valuable conversation starter when visitors are with us. This does present one pitfall that needs to be addressed and should always be something on our minds as we go

about our efforts to engage in saintly living: our family altars being visible to others should always be for their benefit, and not our own. If the purpose of a prominently displayed family altar is to affect a "look at me" attitude where we flaunt our self-perceived holiness like the Zoramites did with their prayers, then we have severely missed the mark. Humility must govern in our lives, and in our efforts to spread our faith to a sin-sick world. Likewise, the display of our family altars should always be a humble display.

What should an altar be, or what should it contain? This is perhaps the least important question among the others but is still one that may present hurdles towards implementing altars in our homes. Being uncertain about how to make an altar should not be a barrier to having one. Whether our altar is a small table with just a set of Scriptures lying on it, a shelf with a picture of Jesus that is kept out of reach of small children, or an entire small bookshelf with Scriptures, good books, a consecration certificate and more, the exact 'what' of our family altars is not terribly important. Whatever our family altars have, they should be distinct and purpose-driven. If an altar can be mistaken for any other mundane part of our homes, it risks fading to the background of our thoughts and our lives. Whatever an altar has, it should be clear that its purpose is Christ, and the items that it possesses should aid in the use of our altars. This leads us straight into our next question.

What should we do at our family altars? If the material already covered hasn't been enough of a hint, prayer should be one of the main uses of our family altars. From Alma 16:219-222, we find the following treatise on prayer: ***“Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him; cry unto him when ye are in your fields; yea, over all your flocks; cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening; yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies; yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness. Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them: cry over the flocks of your fields, that***

*they may increase. But this is not all: ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness; Yes, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you.*” Gathering for family and personal prayer should be a daily occurrence. For families who have young children, this is especially important, as this provides the opportunity to both teach and practice prayer with the children.

Study of the Scriptures is another important task we should be doing regularly and is another option for the use of our altars. Each of us may have our own studies and interests we pursue in our study separately, but we should also take the time to do family study. Each of us has a unique perspective on life, the Scriptures, etc. Corporate study provides us the opportunity to share insights that others may not have, helping to mutually deepen our understanding of the Scriptures and our calling as Remnant saints. When choosing what to study, the upcoming Aaronic Moments or suggested theme for the next scheduled church service could be a good place to start. We should never just arrive at church expecting to be ministered to, and studying future lessons is an excellent way to become better prepared to both feed and be fed in our church gatherings.

Worship is another important use for our family altars. Worship can quite easily incorporate both prayer and study, but there are also times where simple praise and gratitude or a small devotion should be the purpose of our worship at our family altars. Everyone has different talents, and so different families may approach worship in various ways. Some may sing hymns, others share poetry or testimonies, or others give special prayers. Whatever our approach is at our family altars, it must be something we do regularly. A daily family worship or devotion, for example at the end of the day when all the family is gathered together and preparing to go to bed for the night, should be a key point of our

use of family altars. Worship should never be something that we only practice when we go to church, and both our worship in the homes and our worship in our congregations will be improved by our daily practice of such.

Why is it important to have family altars? A glib answer to this question might simply be “because we've been commanded to.” This is certainly a correct answer, and even was the answer Adam gave the angel as to why he offered sacrifice, but there is far deeper meaning to this question. Ordinarily, this would seem a question to start with, not end with, but the other questions we have asked and endeavored to answer lend important framework to the scope of this question. Our opening scripture from D&C R154 gives us some idea as to the why. It speaks of the **“*approaching collapse of moral and family values.*”** This revelation was given to President Frederick N. Larsen on February 11, 2010. It has been eight years now, and it is certainly possible that the case can be made that this approaching collapse is now present. As Christ is our anchor in the storm of life, our family altars need to anchor our homes. Our prayer, worship, and study need to become such second nature that the adversary doesn't stand a chance with us. Our family altars are important because something will always be our altar, and we must decide what it is.

If our family altar is not a place where we worship and pray, then what is it? Ultimately, we serve someone. If our altar is not a place of prayer and worship, then what is that place? Is it our television? The place we keep our checkbook or wallet because we are really worshiping the almighty dollar instead of God? The corner where our hobby is kept that consumes all of our free time? Our family altars are important because they are the balance in which the spirituality of our home is measured. If the focus of our lives is not the Lord, then we are not **“*doers of the word,*”** and we must become doers of the word lest the warning in the scriptures comes to mean us. ***“It is yet day when all can work. The night will***

*come when for many of my people opportunity to assist will have passed."* D&C 142:5b.

**Questions:**

1. How should we set up our altars? (i.e. what should they have, where should we put them, could/should we have more than one for different purposes).
2. When should we use our altars and for what?
3. When we study as a family, what should we study?
4. How do we ensure our family altars are important to us and regularly utilized?

Written by Joshua Turner

## **Fellowship Activities**

The following pages give suggestions of activities that can be done before or after using a study lesson. There are four activities for your use. If an activity is desired with each lesson, the Council would suggest looking on the internet or in books for suggestions. We hope you find these activities enjoyable and useful. The activities were written by Alisa Friedrich and Marci Damon.

### **Women's Speed Friend-Shipping**

**Directions:** This game is played like speed dating. A timer is set for 3 minutes and a conversation about a provided ice breaker question is held between the two participants. When the timer rings, you switch to a new partner with a new question.

Set up tables end-to-end with chairs on both sides OR two rows of chairs facing each other. Have the participants sit on both sides of the table (if you have any members that can't move easily, have them sit on the left side.) The participants on the left side of the table will not move seats. The participants on the right side will rotate one seat to the right when the timer rings.

## Ice breaker activity questions:

What are three things you could not live without?

Who makes you laugh the hardest?

What TV shows are your favorite right now?

What is your favorite book?

What was the best vacation you ever took?

If you could have lunch with one famous person, who would it be?

What do you consider to be your strongest character trait?

Do you think life is harder now or when you were younger?

What was the happiest moment in your life?

What hidden talents do you have?

Would you rather win a million dollars or work doing something that you love?

Aside from your family, what are you most proud of?

What occupation did you want to be when you were growing up?

If you could re-live any time period in your life, what would it be and why?

Who has influenced you the most in your life?

If you could only have one favorite food to eat the rest of your life, what would it be?

Where would you like to go on vacation?

If you could go back in time, with whom would you spend a day with?

If you could be an animal for one day, what would you be and why?

What insect or animal are you most afraid of?

## Supplies Needed:

- Ice breaker questions for each team OR you can have a person in charge read the question before each rotation.
- Timer
- Two rows of chairs set facing each other.

## **Who Am I**

For this activity you will need sticky notes with names of people from the Scriptures or church history written on the note. Place one sticky note on the back of each person, without the person seeing what is written on the note. After everyone has received a note, tell the group that they are to guess what name is written on their back. To do this, everyone is to ask a yes or no question to each of the participants to discover the identity of the name written on their back. For example, “Am I a male?” or “Is this person found in the Bible?” and so on. When everyone is done asking questions, have them sit down and take turns revealing who they think is on the sticky note on their back.

Possible names to use: Adam, Eve, Enoch, Moses, Joshua, King Solomon, Sarah, Ruth, Rahab, Mary (mother of Jesus), Joseph (father of Jesus), John the Baptist, Peter, Lehi, Nephi, Sariah, Alma Jared, King Benjamin, King Mosiah, Joseph Smith Jr., Emma Smith, David Smith, Jason Briggs, Zenas Gurley.

## **Three Things to Furnish Your Home**

Have everyone in your group take turns giving their name and answering the following question and why. Tell the group that they are going to furnish their “ideal” Zionite home. All of the necessary items: furniture, linen, dishes, etc. are present. Money is not an issue. What three items would they need to have in their home to make it a Zionite home, and why did they pick those items. They can be new items that are not currently in their home or items they presently have.

## Zionic Homes Bingo

Directions: Each time you find someone whose actions match one of the traits on your bingo sheet, have her sign her name in the square. The first person to get a bingo wins.

SET ASIDE TIME THIS MONTH TO SERVE OTHERS	HAD TO FORGIVE SOMEONE	HAS A DOG	PRAYED OVER THEIR FOOD TODAY	HAS READ ALL THREE BOOKS OF THE SCRIPTURES
IS A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER	PRACTICES THE WORD OF WISDOM	IS THANKFUL FOR _____.	CAN SPEAK A FOREIGN LANGUAGE	HAS VISITED SOMEONE IN A HOSPITAL OR NURSING HOME (NOT FAMILY)
PLAYS THE PIANO FOR CHURCH SERVICES	HAS A BIRD FEEDER	HAS SHARED A TESTIMONY AT A PRAYER SERVICE	HAS HEARD SOMEONE SPEAK IN TONGUES	IS RELATED TO A MEMBER OF THE PRIESTHOOD

HAS TRAVELED OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES	IS A CONVERT TO THE CHURCH	USES THE MONTHLY PRAYER THEMES ON THE WOMENS' COUNCIL WEBSITE	IS WEARING RED	A SECOND PERSON WHO IS THANKFUL FOR _____.
HAS ATTENDED A WOMEN'S RETREAT	DOES A FAMILY WORSHIP OR DEVOTIONS AT LEAST FIVE TIMES A WEEK	HAS A CHILD THAT HAS BEEN BAPTIZED	HELPED AT A CHURCH CAMP OR VCS	STUDIED THEIR SCRIPTURES THIS WEEK

### **Zionic Homes Bingo**

**Activity Directions:** Each person gets a Bingo card and a pen. Explain to the group that they have 15-20 minutes to mingle and get to know each other. As they find someone whose actions match one of the traits on the card, have that person sign the box. The first person to get a Bingo (five in row up, down or across) wins!

Rule variations:

- A person may sign her own card one time.
- A person may only sign another person's card twice.