

Did He Really Ask Me *That?*

By Joelyn Hansen

I sat and stared in disbelief as Brother Jarman, a member of the branch presidency, waited for my answer.

Maybe he had meant to say *teacher* or *counselor*. But he hadn't. What I heard was correct; he had called me as the Relief Society president in our small branch.

I sat still for some time reflecting on my situation. I was just 27 years old and had never been married. I had recently moved to the area and was beginning a new job as a journalist. My leadership experience was limited. I had served in several callings over the years but never one like this.

Silently I asked myself if I was old enough or experienced enough or if I even had the ability to serve. What could I possibly offer the women of the branch?



I went home that night, knelt in prayer, and asked Heavenly Father for direction. After I finished my prayer, I was instantly drawn to look at my patriarchal blessing. I read this sentence: “You are to be about that work which you were assigned to do now, even while you are young.”

As I read those words, I realized that this was not about my marital status, my age, or what I could do. It was about what the Lord *needed* me to do. I accepted the calling.

Through my calling I was able to help

While we may question our abilities to serve in a Church calling, the Lord knows us. If we are willing to serve, He can qualify us for His work.

people despite our different backgrounds. One woman in particular whom God led me to serve was a woman in her late 20s, a single mother of two children. It didn't take me long to realize that she and I had different lifestyles. I wasn't sure how to be her friend, but in time we did develop a friendship.

On another occasion I met with a less-active woman. I recall entering her home for the first time along with the missionaries and knowing that she had a testimony; she just needed a little bit of "kindling" to help it burn brighter. As we sat in her living room and listened to her, the Spirit was strong and prompted us to bear testimony of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

In the following months she came to church sporadically. But I was continually led by the Spirit and bore my testimony to her. Today she is active and serving in the branch.

Those were some of the highlights of the calling, but the challenges were numerous. It was a struggle to feel like I was doing enough, to find balance between church and work, and to overcome feelings of inadequacy.

In the end I realized that much of what I was able to do was through the Spirit. I have since been released from the calling and have moved away from that city. But I have often reflected how that calling influenced the sisters—and me. Through it I came to the knowledge that I, as a young single sister, had something to offer others as we grew together in the gospel. Though I felt unqualified for the position, I worked hard to fulfill my calling. And as I did, I felt God's hand guiding me and qualifying me for His work. ■

Sustained by His Love

When I received the calling to serve as the student activities leader, I felt completely overwhelmed. I was shy and knew it would be difficult for me to plan activities. Feelings of inadequacy, nervousness, and depression consumed me.

In desperation I turned to Heavenly Father. "How can I do this?" I prayed. "I am small and weak."

Right then, a peaceful, small whisper entered my heart: "Go, my daughter. I love you."

That response from a loving Father strengthened me. Empowered by that prompting, I felt I could do anything. Knowing that He is aware of me, that He loves me, and that He will sustain me was all I needed to fulfill my calling effectively.

I know that whatever our struggles, Heavenly Father loves us and hears our prayers. As we go to Him, we can receive direction and encouragement as we strive to fulfill our callings.

Ye Kyung Koo, Korea

Fulfillment through My Calling

As a single adult, I have found I am able to contribute to my ward and find fulfillment as I serve in different Church callings.

I currently serve as the second counselor in the Young Men presidency.



SEEKING HELP FROM HEAVENLY FATHER

"I would urge all of us to pray concerning our assignments and to seek divine help, that we might be successful in accomplishing that which we are called to do. Someone has said that 'the recognition of power higher than man himself does not in any sense debase him.' He must seek, believe in, pray, and hope that he will find. No such sincere, prayerful effort will go unanswered: that is the very constitution of the philosophy of faith. Divine favor will attend those who humbly seek it."

President Thomas S. Monson, "To Learn, to Do, to Be," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 67.

Being in the Young Men organization has given me the opportunity to go with the deacons to collect fast offerings, meet with less-active members of the ward, and attend youth conferences and Mutual activities. I have also enjoyed going to the temple with the youth to perform baptisms for the dead. While serving in this calling, I have worked hard to help the young men grow into men by showing that I love and appreciate them. These experiences have helped me progress spiritually and have been a blessing in my life.

Mat Carter, Utah, USA

Called to Influence

When I was called to serve as the Mia Maid adviser in the Young Women organization, I doubted that I could fill the calling. I didn't think the girls would like me or learn anything from me, especially when I realized how different things are for them than they were when I was their age.

That feeling changed a few weeks into my calling when I attended a Young Woman event. At the event a mother expressed how grateful she was for the Young Women program because it strengthened her daughter against temptation. Her words helped me understand just how important my role really is.

I realized that my calling was about more than teaching lessons on Sundays and helping plan activities. It was a calling to help these young women prepare for the future—to go to the temple, serve in the Church, and be



As we accept opportunities to serve, we will find, as President Monson promised, that "divine favor will attend those who humbly seek it."

good mothers. I needed to help them prepare for life.

Callings in the Church come from our loving Heavenly Father. He knows our needs and the needs of those we serve. Knowing that can help us have faith in Him and confidence in ourselves, even if we don't understand why we're given a particular assignment or when we don't feel sure about our ability to fulfill a calling. We can be grateful for our opportunities to serve and that we are worthy to have

a calling, and we can take the opportunity to learn as much as we can while we progress in the gospel.

Georgina Tilialo, New Zealand

Sharing My Testimony through Music

Although I was raised in the Church, I became less active when I was 18. Later, when I moved from eastern Germany to Frankfurt, I was invited to live with a member family. I knew this could be an opportunity for me to have a new start and become active in the Church again.

Soon after moving to Frankfurt, I was called as a presidency member of our area's center for young adults. The calling involved coordinating institute classes, family home evenings, and other activities. It required a lot of work, but it was worth it because the center is a great blessing to young adults in the area.

Because of this calling, I learned about and joined a young single adult choir. The choir went on a concert tour to Poland and the Czech Republic. It was a great experience, and I loved having the opportunity to share my testimony through music. I was even happier when I received an e-mail several weeks later telling me that someone had joined the Church as a result of one of our concerts.

As I worked to fulfill my calling, I was able to help strengthen the testimonies of others, and my own testimony of the gospel was strengthened as well. ■

Felix Seidl, Germany

RECEIVING HELP FROM OTHER SOURCES

A new calling can be overwhelming as you strive to learn your responsibilities. However, there are many resources you can turn to for help. These resources, along with praying for guidance and direction from Heavenly Father, will help you know how to fulfill your calling and bless the lives of others as you serve.



- **Handbooks.** Handbooks help explain responsibilities. When you receive your calling, begin by studying the handbook information for your specific responsibility.



- **The bishopric, branch presidency, or other leaders.** Don't be afraid to approach leaders to ask for help. This is a good way to learn what needs to be done.



- **Someone who has previously served in that calling.** These people may have experience or advice that will be useful to you. But remember that the calling is now yours and you can seek inspiration to help you serve effectively.



- **Church websites.** LDS.org includes a lot of information and resources. One place to start might be to select "Serving in the Church," then click on "Handbook 2."