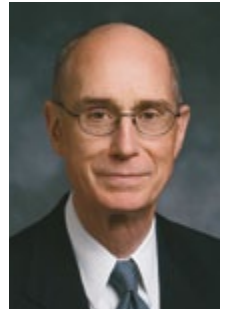


By President
Henry B. Eyring
First Counselor in the
First Presidency



Exhort Them to Pray

When I was a little child, my parents taught me by example to pray. I began with a picture in my mind of Heavenly Father being far away. As I have matured, my experience with prayer has changed. The picture in my mind has become one of a Heavenly Father who is close by, who is bathed in a bright light, and who knows me perfectly.

That change came as I gained a sure testimony that Joseph Smith's report of his experience in 1820 in Manchester, New York, is true:

"I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17).

Heavenly Father was in the grove on that beautiful spring day. He called Joseph by name. And He introduced the resurrected Savior of the world as His "Beloved Son." Whenever and wherever you pray, your testimony of the reality of that glorious experience can bless you.

The Father to whom we pray is the glorious God who created worlds through His Beloved Son. He hears our prayers as He heard Joseph's prayer—as clearly as if they were being offered in His presence. He loves us enough that He gave His Son as our Savior. By that gift He made it possible for us to gain immortality and eternal life. And He offers us, through prayer in the name of His Son, the

opportunity to commune with Him in this life as often as we choose.

Priesthood holders in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have the sacred trust to "visit the house of each member, and *exhort them to pray vocally and in secret*" (D&C 20:47; emphasis added).

There are many ways to exhort someone to pray. For example, we can testify that God has commanded us to pray always, or we can describe examples from scripture and from our own experience of the blessings that come from prayers of gratitude, supplication, and inquiry. For instance, I can testify that I know that Heavenly Father answers prayers. I have received direction and comfort from words that have come into my mind, and I know by the Spirit that the words were from God.

The Prophet Joseph Smith had such experiences, and so can you. He received this answer to heartfelt prayer:

"My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

"And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high" (D&C 121:7–8).

That was revelation from a loving Father to a faithful son in great distress. Every child of God can commune in prayer with Him. No exhortation to pray has had as great an effect on me as have the feelings of love and light that come with answers to humble prayers.

We gain a testimony of any commandment of God by keeping that commandment (see John 7:17). This is true of the command that we pray always vocally and in secret. As your teacher and your friend, I promise that God will answer your prayers and that by the power of the Holy Ghost, you can know for yourself that the answers are from Him. ■



TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

- “Pictures are valuable tools for strengthening the main idea of a lesson” (*Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 176). Show a painting of Joseph Smith or the First Vision. Discuss the experience Joseph Smith had with prayer. How would your prayers be more meaningful if you pictured “Heavenly Father . . . close by,” as does President Eyring?
- As President Eyring suggests, consider sharing your testimony about prayer, describing blessings you have received because of prayer, or sharing scriptures about prayer.

Powerful Prayer

By Austin C.

Prayer is one of the greatest and most important ways to connect to, talk with, and be comforted by our Heavenly Father.

While I was saying my prayers one night, I thought about what my family was in need of, what I was grateful for,

and also what I needed to repent of. Right after closing my prayer, I thought about the many worldly things that could easily distract me from my goals.

But during my prayers, I feel that if I pray sincerely and humbly, my burdens are lightened, my sins are

washed away, and my problems have answers. I realize how close to God I feel while I say my prayers. It shows me how important we all are in God's eyes. I testify that prayer is one of the most powerful and important things that we can do.

CHILDREN

Heavenly Father Hears Me When I Pray

President Eyring says that Heavenly Father "hears our prayers . . . as clearly as if they were being offered in His presence." He can hear us no matter where we are or what's going on around us. Can you find the child praying in this picture?

