

Your **AARONIC** **PRIESTHOOD** *Duties*

You have been ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood.

What are you supposed to do now?

By Paul VanDenBerghe

Church Magazines

You may be a brand new deacon, newly ordained last Sunday, or a teacher helping prepare the sacrament each week. Or you may be a well-seasoned priest, wise in the ways of service projects and in guiding the younger teachers and deacons in their new responsibilities. But all priesthood holders have a common call from the Lord: “Let every man learn his duty, and . . . act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence” (D&C 107:99).

But where can you go to learn about this duty? The first place to look should be the scriptures. Specifically, you’ll want to study the sections in the Doctrine and Covenants where the duties of the Aaronic Priesthood are outlined: section 20:46–60, 72–79; and section 84:111.

Another great resource is the booklet *Fulfilling My Duty to God: For Aaronic Priesthood Holders*. This booklet divides your priesthood responsibilities into three sections: (1) “Administer Priesthood Ordinances,” (2) “Serve Others,” and (3) “Invite All to Come unto Christ.”

In the “Priesthood Duties” section for each office—deacon, teacher, and priest—you’ll find additional scriptures to study and suggestions for making your own plan to help you better understand your priesthood duties.

Let’s take a brief look at some of the main duties of Aaronic Priesthood holders.

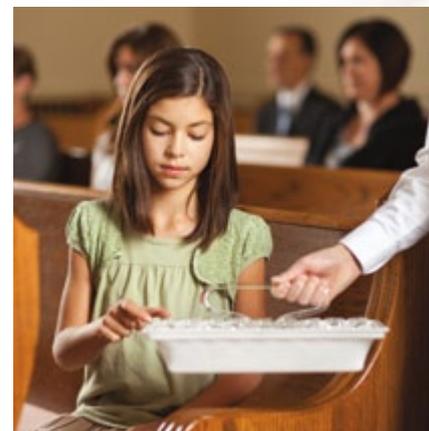
Deacons

A deacon sets a good example for fellow quorum members and other Church members. He lives a righteous life and remains worthy to exercise the priesthood.

He passes the sacrament. This is one of the most sacred duties of a deacon. As a deacon performs this duty, he is a representative of the Lord. He should be worthy to give the emblems of the sacrament to the members of the Church. He should dress and act in a way that will reflect the sacred nature of the sacrament. If possible, he should wear a white shirt.

A deacon serves as a standing minister, “appointed to watch over the church” (D&C 84:111). He is

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also to “warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59). This responsibility includes fellowshipping quorum members and other young men, notifying members of Church meetings, speaking in meetings, sharing the gospel, and bearing testimony.

He assists the bishop in “administering . . . temporal things” (D&C 107:68). This responsibility may include gathering fast offerings, caring for the poor and needy, caring for the meetinghouse and grounds, and serving as a messenger for the bishop in Church meetings.

He participates in quorum instruction by being an active student of the gospel. Other duties include helping members meet their temporal needs, preparing for and giving missionary service, supporting and helping the quorum president, activating young men of quorum age, and learning the gospel.

Teachers

A teacher has all the responsibilities of a deacon. He also has the following responsibilities:



RISE TO YOUR NOBLE STATURE

"We call upon you wonderful young brethren to diligently strive to be 'born again' [see John 3:3–7]. Pray for this mighty change in your life. Study the scriptures. Desire more than all else to know God and to become like His holy Son. Enjoy your youth but 'put away childish things' [1 Corinthians 13:11]:

"Shun profane and foolish chatter.

"Flee all evil.

"Avoid contention.

"Repent where needed.

"This will help you rise to the noble stature of your manhood. The qualities of courage, trustworthiness, humility, faith, and goodness will be yours. Friends will admire you, parents will praise you, brethren in the priesthood will depend on you, and the young women will adore you and become even better because of you. God will honor you and endow your priesthood service with *power from on high*."

Bishop Keith B. McMullin, former Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, "The Power of the Aaronic Priesthood," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 48–49.

He prepares the sacrament. It is the responsibility of the teachers to always have the sacrament ready for sacrament meeting. Preparing the sacrament is a good example of doing service without expecting praise for doing it. Members often do not realize that the teachers prepare the sacrament, but the service is performed nevertheless, and the Lord is pleased because it is true service.

"The teacher's duty is to watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them" (D&C 20:53). One way he does this is by serving as a home teacher.

He is to "see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking" (D&C 20:54). This responsibility includes being a peacemaker by helping the members get along with each other. He should encourage those around him to always see the good in others.

He is to "see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty" (D&C 20:55). Part of this responsibility is inviting others to attend church.

Priests

A priest has all the responsibilities of a deacon and teacher. He also has the following responsibilities:

He officiates at the sacrament table. The honor of administering the sacrament is given to the priests, who offer the sacramental prayers. A priest should be familiar with the



sacramental prayers, dress appropriately, and wash his hands before performing this ordinance. Above all, priests should be worthy to perform this sacred ordinance as the Savior's representatives.

Another duty of priests is to baptize when authorized by the bishop or branch president (see D&C 20:46). Baptism by the proper authority is one of the most important and sacred ordinances in the Church, for it is the ordinance by which we become members of the Church, are forgiven of our sins, and enter the path to the celestial kingdom.

"The priest's duty is to preach, teach, expound, [and] exhort" (D&C 20:46). This means that a priest is

called to teach others the principles of the gospel. And in order to teach the principles of the gospel, of course he must first learn what they are. This responsibility will be a great help as he prepares to serve a full-time mission.

He is to “visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties” (D&C 20:47). A priest does this as he fulfills his responsibility to be a home teacher and visits his assigned families.

He has the authority to confer the Aaronic Priesthood and ordain other priests, teachers, and deacons but only when authorized by the bishop or branch president (see D&C 20:48). The power to confer the Aaronic Priesthood is sacred.

Heavenly Father Will Help You

As you deacons, teachers, and priests come to understand and fulfill your priesthood duties, you will experience the joy that comes from administering priesthood ordinances, from serving others, and from inviting all to come unto Christ. In their message to Aaronic Priesthood holders, the First Presidency wrote: “Heavenly Father has great trust and confidence in you and has an important mission for you to fulfill. He will help you as you turn to Him in prayer, listen for the promptings of the Spirit, obey the commandments, and keep the covenants that you have made” (*Fulfilling My Duty to God* [2010], 5). **NE**

YOUNG WOMEN AND THE PRIESTHOOD

Even though the authority of the priesthood is bestowed only on worthy male members of the Church, the blessings of the priesthood are available to everyone—and these blessings are the same for men and women, girls and boys, rich and poor. All of God’s children have the privilege of receiving the same saving ordinances of the priesthood.

As chosen daughters of God, all young women who have been baptized have also received the gift of the Holy Ghost. They have the right to seek and be blessed by spiritual gifts, such as “the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth” (Articles of Faith 1:7). As young women live righteous lives and strive to serve others by receiving and developing these gifts of the Spirit, their example for good will be a strong influence on the young men around them.

How can young women help young men be worthy priesthood holders? One young man answered: “I think two of the biggest things they do are to dress modestly and be kind to everyone. The modest dress helps me keep my thoughts in check, and I can actually look at them while talking!”



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More on Priesthood Duties

Visit DutytoGod.lds.org for information, videos, and stories about priesthood duties and Duty to God.



FROM A TEACHER: PARTNERED WITH THE SPIRIT

By Caleb I.

Being introduced to the responsibility of home teaching at such an early age made me feel like I was special, and it helped me to feel the Spirit. One of the people we home taught was a widow who lived alone. She struggled with various medical problems and always appreciated our visits and our company. Knowing that we were there to bring her happiness and to bring the priesthood into her home was a witness to me of how important our responsibility is.

FROM A DEACON: LEARNING ABOUT PRIESTHOOD KEYS

By Dallin H.

One experience I had with the *Duty to God* book was when I was working on the section titled “Doctrinal Topics.” During that time I was called as deacons quorum president. I didn’t know what to expect, and I didn’t know if I was qualified to hold the sacred keys of the Aaronic Priesthood. Through “Doctrinal Topics” I studied “Priesthood and Priesthood Keys.” It taught me how these keys came to the earth and how I should use them to receive revelation

from Heavenly Father.

I was stunned by how much knowledge was at my fingertips. I searched many books about this topic and received many useful things from them. I eventually prayed to know if I was worthy to hold these sacred keys.

Instantly the Spirit fell upon me gently but with a strong witness that Heavenly Father loved me and that He had a work for me to do in this quorum at this time. I felt I was ready and worthy to hold the sacred keys of the priesthood. *Duty to God* is not just a book. It is a blessing. And I want to share this blessing with my quorum members. **NE**



Home teaching has also helped me get a head start on learning how to prepare lessons and schedule appointments with families. Learning and fulfilling the duties of priesthood callings isn't as hard as it sounds. Our duty to magnify our callings is one that we don't have to tackle by ourselves. As long as we do our part and prepare, we'll never be left alone. Sometimes I find that I prepare a message for home teaching, and when it's time to present it, I'm prompted to talk about something totally different. The message ends up being even better than I had planned. The Holy Ghost will be there for you, and if you ever feel like you don't know how to handle the responsibility of holding the priesthood, just listen for the Spirit. The Holy Ghost will tell you what you need to say at the exact moment you need to say it (see D&C 100:5–6). **NE**

FROM A PRIEST: ON THE LORD'S ERRAND

By Brian L.

As a member of our ward's priests quorum, I had the responsibility to visit many members of our ward who were shut-ins and could not come to church. Every Sunday, another priest and I would pack up a tray, white cloths, small cups, and bread, and go to each of the members' homes who couldn't make it to church but still wanted to take the sacrament.

For the first few weeks I viewed



this duty as me giving up precious napping hours every Sunday afternoon. But as I watched the deep reverence these elderly members displayed for the sacrament, my entire demeanor changed. I began to see myself as a servant who helped bless the lives of many who could not receive those blessings otherwise. As I blessed the sacrament each week, I felt greater gravity and peace in the words to “remember Him” and “keep His commandments.”

One woman in particular, Sister Fischer, who was so weak she could barely move her head, always greeted us with a smile and often expressed her gratitude through tears. These experiences allowed me to see that it was not me she was grateful for;

she was grateful for the priesthood of God, for the sacrament, and for the principle of service.

Many youth today see the teenage years as a time to have fun, live it up, and party. As young men of the priesthood, we can't afford to participate in anything that inhibits us from being clean and pure. Being called upon regularly to exercise my duties as an Aaronic Priesthood holder changed my life forever and instilled in me a profound desire to always remember who I am and to live a life of worthiness and service.

Knowing that it was up to me, a 16-year-old young man, to be the vessel to provide the sacrament to many who needed help urged me to live up to my full priesthood potential. **NE**