

A RELEASE IS A BEGINNING, NOT AN END

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We do not step up or down in the Church. We move forward together.

A friend of mine was recently released as the bishop of his ward. A few days later, knowing I had also served as a bishop, he asked to speak to me.

“Is it normal to feel what I’m feeling?” he asked.

“What are you feeling?”

“Disconnected, I guess. I have been involved in so many people’s lives, and now all of a sudden, it’s over. Will I ever feel so involved again?”

His question took me back to the time of my own release. I remembered having similar feelings. I missed being deeply involved in helping people draw nearer to the Savior and to their Father in Heaven. I missed encouraging them to seek and follow the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Serving as a bishop had been a wonderful blessing, and now it was gone.

But was it really? As a little time passed, I realized that the blessing of giving service never disappears. It is an abiding opportunity. As disciples of Jesus Christ, aren’t we *always* to remember Him? (see D&C 20:77, 79). Aren’t we *always* to help others draw

nearer to the Savior and to their Father in Heaven? Aren’t we *always* to help others, especially our spouses and families, seek and follow the inspiration of the Holy Ghost?

These words from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles came to mind: “We do not ‘step down’ when we are released, and we do not ‘step up’ when we are called. There is no ‘up or down’ in the service of the Lord. There is only ‘forward or backward,’ and that difference depends on how we accept and act upon our releases and our callings. I once presided at the release of a young stake president who had

given fine service for nine years and was now rejoicing in his release and in the new calling he and his wife had just received. They were called to be the nursery leaders in their ward. Only in this Church would that be seen as equally honorable!”¹

As my friend and I talked, we both realized that service doesn’t end when we are released from a calling, whatever that calling may be. For the followers of Christ, service never ends. Soon we receive a new calling, and we begin again as we all move forward together. ■

NOTE

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 49.

