



SPIRITUAL SAFETY TIPS FOR FREQUENT TRAVELERS

By Todd Hansen

Like many people, I worked in a career that required extensive travel. Although commuting had always been a significant job demand, my travel gradually increased until it was rare to go more than a few days without boarding an airplane.

While I learned to cope with the routine, there were many times I longed to be with family in the safe, familiar surroundings of home. I occasionally found myself going back to a hotel room at the end of a long day tired and lonely.

Factors like discouragement, fatigue, loneliness, and the absence of family, —along with the cunning of Satan—contribute to a high-risk environment that can make us vulnerable to temptation. President

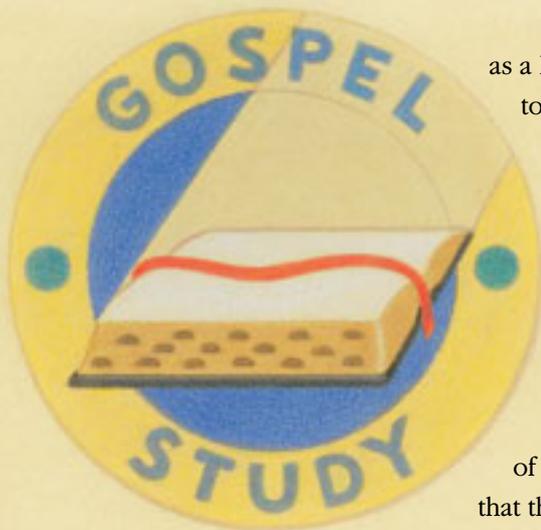
James E. Faust (1920–2007), second counselor in the First Presidency, noted, “In our uncertain physical environment, we need to increase our spiritual nutrients—nutrients that come from the knowledge of the fulness of the gospel and the powers of the holy priesthood. When such knowledge penetrates our souls, we not only draw closer to God but we also want to serve Him and our fellowmen.”¹

Following are 11 “spiritual nutrients” that have sustained and fortified me during nearly 30 years of frequent travel.

FAMILY REMINDERS

Displaying a picture of family or loved ones in a visible place in a hotel room can serve as a reminder of priorities and of what matters most. Not only will the photo make the hotel room more inviting, but also can serve





as a helpful reminder to call home regularly. Displaying a favorite picture of the Savior can also help invite the Spirit.

GOSPEL STUDY

One blessing of traveling alone is that the resulting solitude invites pondering and reflection. Some of the most treasured spiritual insights I have experienced came following gospel study combined with prayerful pondering in the quiet of a hotel room.

The Scriptures

When I travel, I like to carry a small version of the scriptures in a briefcase or backpack. Placing scriptures near the bed for easy access promotes daily scripture study.

Patriarchal Blessings

Reading and studying my patriarchal blessing has provided understanding and insight that enriches my life. Over the years I memorized my patriarchal blessing, and on sleepless nights, rather than turning on the TV, I found it helpful to recite my patriarchal blessing and ponder its meaning.

Church Publications

Whether on an airplane or in a hotel room, Church magazines are an excellent source of inspiration and instruction. The conference issue of the *Ensign* is a particularly powerful source of

spiritual nutrition. Reading Church magazines on an airplane can also lead to gospel discussions and missionary opportunities with fellow travelers.

PRAYER

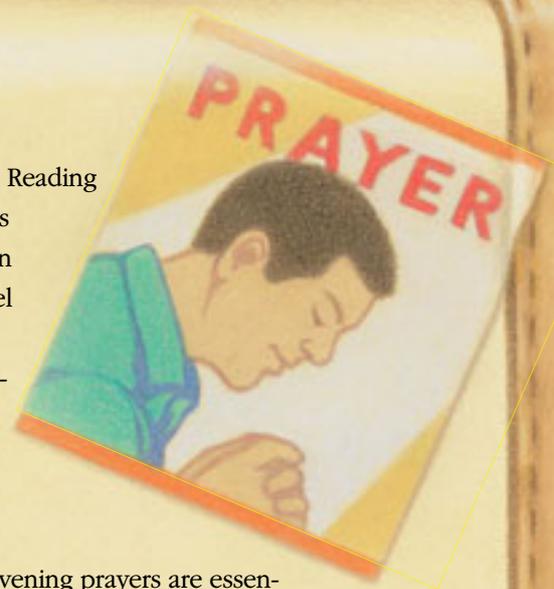
Morning and evening prayers are essential spiritual nutrients. In my petitions, I invite the Spirit to be with me during the day. I pray for power over temptation; strength to honor baptismal, priesthood, and temple covenants; and the opportunity to be “an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

Regardless of where travel takes me, my wife and I coordinate a time to visit by phone and kneel together in prayer. We can be continents apart and still feel close to each other and the Lord when we do this. When our children lived at home, they also participated. This family tradition has richly blessed us over the years.

TEMPLE ATTENDANCE

If travels take you to a location with a temple nearby, take advantage of the opportunity to attend the temple or walk the grounds.

Although our home is in a suburb of Phoenix, Arizona, USA, for almost five years much of my travel involved commutes to San Francisco, California, USA. During that time I attended the Oakland



California Temple almost as frequently as I attended the Mesa Arizona Temple. I found strength in visiting the house of the Lord. Participating in sacred temple ordinances truly encircles us in the robes of righteousness (see 2 Nephi 4:33) and draws us close to Heavenly Father.

A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

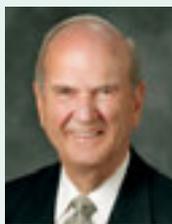
Doctrine and Covenants 89 promises “wisdom and great treasures of knowledge” for obedience to the Lord’s law of health, the Word of Wisdom (verse 19). A healthy lifestyle promotes spiritual nutrition. The opposite is also true: the negative physical effects of an unhealthy lifestyle can suppress our ability to hear and follow the “still small voice” (1 Nephi 17:45).

Regular Exercise

Physical exercise not only promotes good health, it is also a positive outlet for tension. It may be helpful to engage in a workout routine that can be easily maintained on the road. For example, assuming your health permits it, running can be an excellent form of exercise. Many hotels include pools or exercise rooms, which can help you maintain a balanced exercise program.

Nutritious Diet

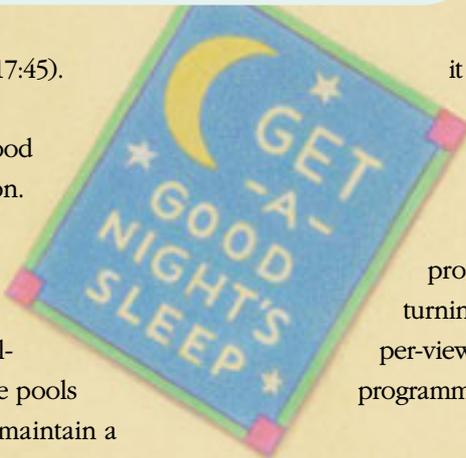
More and more careers require travel involving all-day meetings, hours of sitting, and refreshment breaks that often include an array of high-fat, high-sugar treats. Evenings are frequently filled with long, late dinners and additional rich, high-fat food. Overindulging not only impacts blood sugar levels and the ability to remain alert,



OUR LIVES SHOULD NOT BE DIVIDED UP

Danger lurks when we divide ourselves with expressions such as ‘my private life,’ ‘my professional life,’ or even ‘my best behavior.’ Living life in separate compartments can lead to internal conflict and exhausting tension. . . . Inner peace comes only as we maintain the integrity of truth in all aspects of our lives. When we covenant to follow the Lord and obey His commandments, we accept His standards in every thought, action, and deed.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Living by Scriptural Guidance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 17.



it can also affect spiritual vigilance. A nutritious diet, on the other hand, promotes spiritual stamina.

A Good Night's Rest

Retire to bed at a reasonable hour and allow yourself seven to eight hours of sleep (D&C 88:124). I found it helpful to request a room located away from elevators, ice machines, and areas with heavy foot traffic. Rooms tucked away at the end of a hall will likely provide more peace and quiet. If travel takes you to the same location often, find lodging you are comfortable with and stay there each time. Hotel personnel will come to know you and may be in a position to accommodate your preferences.

When falling asleep is difficult, it may help to recite hymns, poetry, or scriptures. You might also choose to read a good book or magazine that focuses on a favorite hobby or interest. Given the nature of some late-night programming, I found it best to avoid turning on the television, particularly pay-per-view channels. Hearing or seeing offensive programming creates vulnerability to temptation.

THE POWER OF SPIRITUAL NUTRIENTS

Every time I walked out the door during my 27 years of frequent travel, I had the same goal: to return as pure as I was when I left. Fortunately, I have found that with a little preparation and fortification with spiritual nutrients, it is possible for us to invite the Spirit to be with us wherever we go. ■

NOTE

1. James E. Faust, “Spiritual Nutrients,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 54.