

# BLESSED BY Councils

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Some years ago when I was serving as a bishop, a family in our ward experienced a crisis when the father lost his job.

I was concerned about their well-being, and I visited their home to counsel with them and to offer Church assistance. Interestingly, they were reluctant to respond to my offer of temporary assistance, and so I took the matter to the ward council. In a spirit of loving confidentiality, I shared with them my concern for this wonderful family and asked for their ideas as to how we could bless them.

Our Relief Society president volunteered to visit with the mother to ascertain their temporal needs and to work with them in obtaining any commodities they needed—which, of course, was her responsibility according to the program of the Church. Within a couple of days, she had accomplished what I had been unable to accomplish, and the family humbly and gratefully accepted commodity assistance. The elders quorum president counseled with the father of the family—which, of course, was his right and duty—and worked with him on ways to find a job. Our Young Men president noticed that the family’s house was in desperate need of painting, and he arranged for his priests to work with the high priests group to paint the house.

During the course of my conversation with the parents, I discovered that they were

## STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO NEED HELP

“Ward council members strive to stay informed about the needs, well-being, and spiritual progress of members in their organizations. They also stay informed about members who face special challenges or changing circumstances. This information allows them to strengthen those who most need their help.”

*Handbook 2: Administering the Church (2010), 4.5.1.*

*Handbook 2 and the November 2010 and February 2011 worldwide leadership training broadcasts are available at LDS.org. Click “Menu” and then “Serving in the Church.”*

heavily in debt and were in arrears on their mortgage. Following approved welfare guidelines, I inquired about the ability of their extended family to help but received little information. Our Relief Society president, however, was able to learn that the mother had a brother who was wealthy.

“There’s no reason to contact him,” the mother said. “We haven’t even spoken in years.”

I understood her dilemma, and yet I felt it was important to follow the order of the Church. And so I counseled with her and eventually received her permission to contact her brother, who lived in a distant city. I called him and explained the difficult circumstances in which his younger sister was living. Within three days he arrived in Salt Lake City and helped get his sister’s financial affairs in order. Meanwhile, our elders quorum president helped her husband find a steady job with a good income.

More important, however, was that they were closer and more united as a family. I don’t think I’ll ever forget that tender moment of reunion between the mother and her brother after years of estrangement. Although her brother had become alienated from the Church, there was an immediate spirit-to-spirit bonding. As a result, the brother eventually returned to full activity in the Church and renewed his relationship with his family.

All of this happened because of the inspired work of a faithful ward council functioning according to the program that God has outlined for His children through His servants. ■

*From Counseling with Our Councils (1997), 15–17.*