

WAS I DOING ENOUGH?

By Brooke Barton

A lesson about lost sheep helped me understand how to best fulfill my calling.

At the age of 23, I was called as a Relief Society president in our married student ward. I remember the inadequacies I felt, coupled with the desire to do my best. I was eager and excited to serve but doubted my ability to be a good leader.

After a few months as the Relief Society president, I felt that I wasn't doing enough. I wanted to be able to connect with the sisters and be in tune with their individual needs, but I felt that I was coming up short.

I talked with my bishop and expressed my concerns. I explained how I just couldn't reach all of the sisters I wanted to. I described how I wished that I had five of me to get the job done the way I thought it should be. I tried to keep my concerns light and humorous, but my eyes quickly filled with tears of discouragement. He smiled and offered some of the best leadership advice I have ever received.

"Are you familiar with the story of the shepherd who, upon losing one of his flock, left 'the ninety and nine' to find it?" he asked (see Luke 15:4–7). I nodded.

"There seems to be so much wisdom in that parable," he continued. "The shepherd knew that the ninety and nine would be all right if he left them to look for the one lost sheep."

Then my bishop offered the following advice:

"You see, the ninety and nine have a great way of looking after each other when you're gone. They will buoy each other up and hold together very well. I suggest that you concentrate on the ones who seem lost. The rest will be OK."

I felt a strong witness that what he had told me was true and that I didn't need to worry about the entire flock all at once. My purpose was to find those who were lost and to invite them back into the fold. In that way, Heavenly Father's purposes could be brought to pass, and I could be a tool in His hands.

As I heeded the bishop's counsel, I felt a greater measure of understanding of how the Lord would have me serve in His kingdom. I also received spiritual fulfillment that strengthened me in my calling because I was serving as the Savior had instructed. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, my bishop had given me a great gift of understanding and insight.

I testify that as we pray and seek inspiration from our priesthood leaders, they will be inspired to show us how to lead in righteous ways. ■

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