



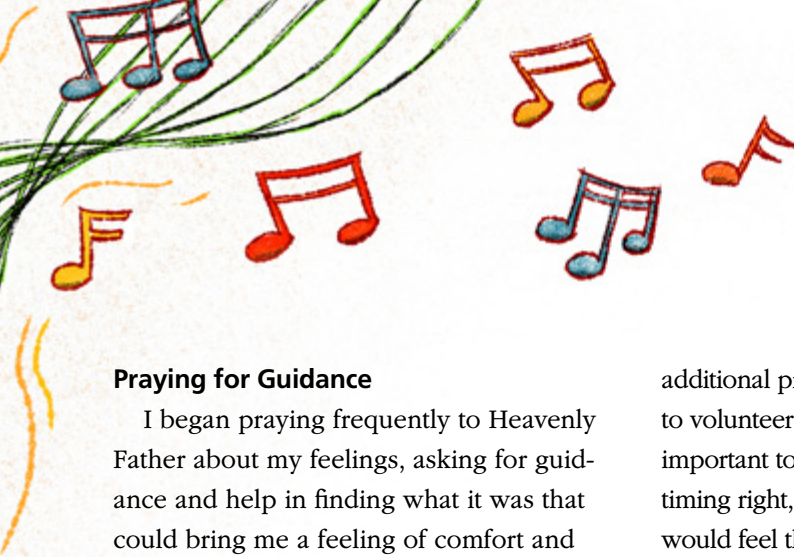
GROWING IN MY GOLDEN YEARS

I questioned my worth but learned that now was my time to develop a talent that would enable me to serve and have much joy.

By Joan Hill Cheney

I was 72 years old, and my life and my attitude were beginning to change. My energy and health were also changing, and I was feeling an emptiness that I had not experienced before. My three children and their families did not live close by, and although we emailed and called each other frequently, I didn't get to see them regularly. I had remarried after the death of my first husband, and my second husband also had three children, but only one lived nearby. He and I had served a mission together, and our life had been good. I had fulfilled many callings in the Church, and through each one I had gained increased testimony and understanding of the gospel and welcomed new friends into my life.

But I started to question my worth and what I had left to offer.



Praying for Guidance

I began praying frequently to Heavenly Father about my feelings, asking for guidance and help in finding what it was that could bring me a feeling of comfort and fulfillment. I wanted to be able to continue to serve in some way.

Then I realized that there was something I had always desired to do but had never taken the time to work at and make happen—that was to become better and more qualified in music. Music had been an important part of my growing-up years, and I loved it. However, through the years of raising the children, working part-time as a nurse, and fulfilling Church callings, I had played the piano only occasionally. At the same time, I did make sure that my children took music lessons.

Becoming a Temple Organist

Then a good friend suggested that she and I volunteer to play the organ at the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple (one of the few temples with live background organ music). I loved going to the temple and always enjoyed listening to the organ, but I also realized that I was not prepared to do such a thing.

Shortly after this discussion with my friend, I enrolled in an organ training class. I was motivated and excited to take this brief course, but I knew I would need much

additional practice to feel confident and ready to volunteer at the temple. I knew it was important to play the correct notes, get the timing right, and play softly so that the patrons would feel the Spirit through the music.

After about five months of practicing many hours, I put my application in at the temple to be a volunteer organist. There was an opening available, and I started my new position. A year earlier I would never have thought it possible that I would be having such an opportunity! My prayers had been answered.

Reflecting on What I've Learned

Being a temple organist has been a great blessing in my life. It has made me stretch and work at something to become better. I have an increased love for the hymns, and I pay more attention to their messages. They bring peace and comfort to my heart as I practice and play them.

I have learned that we can always find a way to serve if we so desire. Talents can be developed more fully or even begun as old age approaches, life can take on new meaning, and we can have a feeling of self-worth. We just have to turn to Heavenly Father for inspiration and guidance, and then, as that direction comes, we need to take a step forward and make the effort required. ■

The author lives in Idaho, USA.



LIFT UP YOUR SOUL IN PRAYER

“Lift up your soul in prayer and explain to your Heavenly Father what you are feeling. . . . Pour out your heart and express your gratitude. Let Him know of the trials you are facing. Plead with Him in Christ’s name for strength and support. Ask that your ears may be opened, that you may hear His voice.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Hope of God’s Light,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 75.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Develop a talent or artistic ability.
- Take a class in something I’ve always wanted to learn about.
- Help and serve my family.
- Serve diligently in my Church calling.
- Volunteer for community service.
- Become involved in a humanitarian project.
- Serve a mission either at home or away.
- Take a family history class.
- Volunteer to serve in the temple.
- Join a senior group offering classes or activities.