

This month marks 100 years since the First Presidency encouraged members to have family home evening. The following excerpt comes from the First Presidency letter introducing family home evening. It was released in April 1915 and printed in the Improvement Era in June 1915 (pages 733–34). Capitalization and punctuation have been modernized.

Dear Brethren and Sisters:
We counsel the Latter-day Saints to observe more closely the commandment of the Lord given in the 68th section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

“And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion . . . that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents; . . .

“And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord” [see D&C 68:25–28].

The children of Zion should also observe more fully the commandment of the Lord given to ancient Israel and reiterated to the Latter-day Saints:

“Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” [Exodus 20:12].

These revelations apply with great force to the Latter-day Saints, and it is required of fathers and mothers in this Church that these commandments shall be taught and applied in their homes.

To this end we advise and urge the inauguration of a “home evening”

throughout the Church, at which time fathers and mothers may gather their boys and girls about them in the home and teach them the word of the Lord. They may thus learn more fully the needs and requirements of their families, at the same time familiarizing themselves and their children more thoroughly with the principles of the

100 YEARS OF Family Home Evening



gospel of Jesus Christ. This home evening should be devoted to prayer, singing hymns, songs, instrumental music, scripture reading, family topics, and specific instruction on the principles of the gospel and on the ethical problems of life, as well as the duties and obligations of children to parents, the home, the Church, society, and the nation. For the smaller children, appropriate recitations, songs, stories, and games may be introduced. Light

refreshments of such a nature as may be largely prepared in the home might be served.

Formality and stiffness should be studiously avoided, and all the family should participate in the exercises.

These gatherings will furnish opportunities for mutual confidence between parents and children,

between brothers and sisters, as well as give opportunity for words of warning, counsel, and advice by parents to their boys and girls. They will provide opportunity for the boys and girls to honor father and mother and to show their appreciation of the blessings of home so that the promise of the Lord to them may be literally fulfilled and their lives be prolonged and made happy. . . .

We . . . encourage the young people to remain at home that evening and use their energies in making it instructive, profitable, and interesting.

If the Saints obey this counsel, we promise that great blessings will result. Love at home and obedience to parents will increase. Faith will be developed in the hearts of the youth of Israel, and they will gain power to combat the evil influences and temptations which beset them.

Your brethren,
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ANTHON H. LUND
CHARLES W. PENROSE
First Presidency ■