

A photograph of two women, one in a red shirt and one in a green shirt, looking at a smartphone together. They are standing at a table covered with a green and white striped cloth, which has several papers and documents on it. The background is bright and slightly out of focus, suggesting an indoor setting with large windows.

# How You Can Help with **TEMPLE WORK**

*Temple work brings joy to you and those you love.*

**By Megan Armknecht**

**H**ave you ever been so excited about something that you just couldn't wait to start? Maybe you were excited about going with your brother to see your favorite sports team play, or maybe your best friend invited you to an amazing concert.

In the 1840s, God restored a gospel truth that made Joseph Smith really happy and excited. He learned that

through proper priesthood authority, people could be baptized by proxy for their loved ones who had not been baptized in this life.

The doctrine of baptism for the dead was especially exciting to Joseph because his older brother Alvin had died at the age of 25 without having been baptized. Joseph had been worried that Alvin was condemned to eternal suffering because he had not been baptized in this life.

But through the revelations on salvation for the dead, Joseph learned that Alvin could be baptized by proxy and saved in the celestial kingdom (see D&C 137).

### Sharing the Truth of Baptism for the Dead with Others

Not only was this news exciting to the Smith family, but it also was exciting to the other Saints in Nauvoo, Illinois, too. On August 15, 1840, Joseph Smith taught about the ordinance of baptism for their ancestors at a funeral for Seymour Brunson. Joseph said that it was time to fulfill and restore that practice, which had been practiced by Saints in ancient times (see 1 Corinthians 15:29).<sup>1</sup>

When the Saints in Nauvoo heard that they could be baptized for their deceased family members, they were thrilled. “The moment I heard of it my soul leaped with joy,” said President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98).<sup>2</sup>

Once the Saints realized they could perform baptisms for the dead, they

wanted to get their families’ work done as soon as they could. Many wrote to family members so they could gather names of deceased relatives. Because there was no temple at the time, hundreds of people went down to the Mississippi River to perform the ordinances.

### Baptism for the Dead and You

The excitement about temple work and baptism for the dead continues today. There are temples around the world, and temple work opens the door for *everyone* to have salvation. It is such a gift!

Just like the Saints in Nauvoo, you can gather with your friends and family and do proxy baptisms for those who have died. You can take your family to the temple. This means taking not only your *living* family to the temple but also your deceased loved ones. If your family can’t go to the temple, you can ask friends, leaders, or quorum and class members to go with you.

Going to the temple with loved ones brings joy. It connects families, brings peace, and reminds us that God loves all of us and that He offers salvation to all of His children.

And that is something we can all be excited about. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

#### NOTES

1. See Matthew McBride, “Letters on Baptism for the Dead,” May 29, 2013, [history.lds.org](http://history.lds.org).
2. Wilford Woodruff, in *Deseret News*, May 27, 1857, 91.



### UNITING OUR FAMILIES

“If the youth in each ward will not only go to the temple and

do baptisms for their dead but also work with their families and other ward members to provide the family names for the ordinance work they perform, both they and the Church will be greatly blessed. . . . The eternally significant blessing of uniting our own families is almost beyond comprehension.”

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Roots and Branches,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 46–47.