

UNTO THE LEAST OF THESE

By Dianne W. Stoddard

As the mother of four small children, I didn't seem to have a spare moment. During one of my busy and hectic days, our bishop called and asked if he could meet with my husband and me. To my surprise he called me to be Relief Society president.

I told the bishop I would have to pray about it. I just didn't know how I would be able to fulfill such a time-intensive calling at that time in my life. Feelings of inadequacy and uncertainty filled my mind, and I cried off and on for two days.

One of my visiting teachers, who had no idea what turmoil I was experiencing, called and made an appointment to see me. During her visit she shared a story about Emma Somerville McConkie, who had served as a Relief Society president during the early days of the Church in Utah. A woman in Sister McConkie's ward had several children, including a new baby. Because the woman's family was poor, Sister McConkie went daily to the home, taking food and helping the mother care for the child.

"One day [Sister McConkie] returned home especially tired and weary. She slept in her chair. She dreamed she was bathing a baby

which she discovered was the Christ Child. She thought, *Oh, what a great honor to thus serve the very Christ.* As she held the baby in her lap, she was all but overcome. . . . Unspeakable joy filled her whole being. . . . Her joy was so great it awakened her. As she awoke, these words were spoken to her, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'"¹

The story filled my heart and soul with comfort and peace. I knew that the Lord was aware of my circumstances, that He wanted me to serve the sisters in the ward, and that He would bless me so that I would be able to fulfill all of my responsibilities. I accepted the calling.

I am still amazed that I was able to fulfill my calling while tending to the needs and wants of my family, and I am grateful for a visiting teacher who was inspired to share a timely message. Since then I have never hesitated to accept a call. I have a testimony that when we serve our Heavenly Father, He blesses us with the time, energy, and ability we need to fulfill our callings. ■

NOTE

1. Bruce R. McConkie, "Charity Which Never Faileth," *Relief Society Magazine*, Mar. 1970, 169; emphasis added.



SERVING WISELY

It takes wisdom to balance leadership callings with the demands of family, work, and other responsibilities. Here are six suggestions:

1. **Focus on people not programs.** Focus council, presidency, and leadership meetings on people's needs.
2. **Be innovative.** Use creativity and the guidance of the Spirit within the framework of Church policies and principles.
3. **Delegate responsibility, and allow others to grow.** A leader should counsel, advise, and motivate but not do the work of others.
4. **Eliminate guilt.** Realize that we must do all things "in wisdom and order" (Mosiah 4:27), giving greater attention to different priorities at different times.
5. **Do the best you can.** Understand your capabilities, pace yourself, and prioritize your resources to help others while protecting your health.
6. **Be mindful of the needs of new members.** Give them opportunities to learn the gospel, get to know other members, and give meaningful service.

From Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "O Be Wise," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 18–20.