

Singing a New Hymn

By Debra Randall

As the bishop read the names of the ward members being released from their callings that Sunday, I sighed, looking down at my idle hands. I was being released as first counselor in the Relief Society presidency. It was hard to think of leaving this calling that I had really enjoyed and of losing the close relationship with the other sisters in the presidency.

When I heard the names of the new presidency read, I felt a confirmation of the Spirit, letting me know all was as it should be. These new sisters had been chosen by the Lord to do this work. As I raised my hand to sustain them, I knew they would do a wonderful job and there would be other ways for me to serve. Gratefully, I was at peace.

Then it was time to sing the sacrament hymn. The bishop announced an alternate version of an old favorite, “While of These Emblems We Partake” (*Hymns*, nos. 173 and 174). Listening to the organist play the introduction, I felt my peace wane. “Why can’t we just sing the familiar version?” I wondered silently. “I like it so much better.” But as I began to sing, the beauty of the

A familiar hymn set to an unfamiliar tune taught me that I could keep doing and learning what I always had or I could grow in ways only the Lord could imagine.



unfamiliar melody touched my soul, and I realized that this tune was a wonderful setting for these lyrics. The music caused me to consider the hymn’s meaning in a new way.

Suddenly this hymn and being released came together in my mind through a powerful impression of the Spirit. The new presidency would be doing the same work I had done but with different hands and a fresh perspective—just as the hymn had the same message but different music. And I would be given a new calling to fit with my melody. This change would help me grow in ways I could not have imagined if I had stayed in the same old place.

I had always known that the gospel and the organization of the Church bless every member in many, many ways. We learn how to lead as well as to support, and the process of this learning repeats throughout our lives. But I realized in that sacrament meeting that as long as we listen to the Spirit, we will recognize in each change the miraculous constancy of our Heavenly Father’s plan for us. ■