

# Blessings

## OF THE SABBATH DAY

*Saints around the world talk about how their lives have been blessed in unique ways by this special, holy day.*

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**P**icture yourself receiving the most important invitation of your life: a chance to spend a day with Jesus Christ. How would you prepare spiritually and physically for such a day? What blessings might you hope would come from such a visit?

The Lord has invited each of us to set aside a day to commune with Him—the Sabbath day, which He has blessed and made holy (see Exodus 20:11). What blessings do you enjoy when you keep the Sabbath day holy? Here are some thoughts from Saints around the world that might prompt ideas and impressions of your own.

### **Closeness to God and Christ**

Sister Andrea Julião, from São Paulo, Brazil, discovered that just as relationships with earthly friends grow stronger when we spend time together, our relationship with Heavenly Father becomes stronger when we focus on Him through Sabbath worship.

While visiting family who weren't members of the Church, Sister Julião decided to wake up early Sunday and try to find a Latter-day Saint church building in the area. As her family prepared for a day of adventurous recreation,

Sister Julião searched the neighborhood until she met someone who pointed out a steeple in the distance. Sister Julião was able to attend worship services. "I had the most amazing Sabbath day," she said. "I felt Heavenly Father's love so strongly. I felt that He enjoys when His children obey His teachings. I gained a stronger testimony of the Church of Jesus Christ."

### **Healing and Relief**

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, spoke about how the Sabbath day blessed his life as a young professional: "I first found delight in the Sabbath many years ago when, as a busy surgeon, I knew that the Sabbath became a day for personal healing. By the end of each week, my hands were sore from repeatedly scrubbing them with soap, water, and a bristle brush. I also needed a breather from the burden of a demanding profession. Sunday provided much-needed relief."<sup>1</sup>

### **Time for Family History**

Not long ago, 10-year-old Eliza from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, gave a talk in sacrament meeting about one way



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that focusing on Sabbath-appropriate activities has blessed her life. Because Eliza sometimes struggled with boredom on Sundays, she and her family decided that indexing would be a good activity to try. Eliza soon discovered that she loved working with the names and records. “When I start, I just want to keep doing it forever,” she shared with the congregation.

When Eliza’s great-grandma heard how much she enjoyed family history, she taught Eliza how to add stories and pictures to their family tree online. “It is so much fun, I love it!” Eliza said. “When I do family history work, I feel the spirit of Elijah. It is an awesome feeling.”

### **A Lifted Soul**

Sister Cheryl A. Esplin, first counselor in the Primary general presidency, testified of the blessing of taking the

sacrament on the Sabbath day: “When I partake of the sacrament, I sometimes picture in my mind a painting that depicts the resurrected Savior with His arms outstretched, as if He is ready to receive us into His loving embrace. I love this painting. When I think about it during the administration of the sacrament, my soul is lifted as I can almost hear the Savior’s words: ‘Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive; and blessed are those who come unto me’ [3 Nephi 9:14].”<sup>2</sup>

### **Chances to Minister**

Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that one of the reasons why we need to rest from our labors on Sunday is that they take us away from “the opportunity to minister to others.”<sup>3</sup>

Ministering on the Sabbath is something Sister Zola Adjei came to love while growing up in the Kpong Branch in Ghana. While home from boarding school during the summers, she and other youth would go in groups to visit members of their branch they hadn't seen in a while. "It was a sacrifice because most of us felt very hungry after church, and we were so far from our homes that we didn't have time to eat and gather again," Sister Adjei said. But the sacrifice was worth it, as they were able to pray and sing hymns with their fellow branch members and invite them to church and activities. One of the youth would offer to walk with them to church the next Sunday.

"This practice formed a bond amongst us," Sister Adjei said. "Some of us have stayed strong friends from the decisions we made to go out and bring back our lost friends by giving up a few hours of our Sabbath day."

### Missionary Opportunities

In today's world, making Sunday a holy day will surely set us apart—giving us chances to share the gospel in a natural way as others notice the difference in our weekly routine. The Davies family experienced this while living on the island of Grenada with their young daughter, Adrielle. "None of Adrielle's friends are members of the Church, and while many of them believe in God, Sunday to them is simply another day of the weekend," explained Sister McKenzie Lawyer Davies, Adrielle's mother.

A few months ago, Adrielle was invited to a birthday party at a movie theater on Sunday. Her family decided to drop off a gift instead of going to the movie and party. "Because we simply stopped by to wish them well, we were able to share our beliefs about the Sabbath with them in a friendly and open way," Sister Lawyer Davies said. "It made me happy that my little girl was already sharing the gospel."

### Protection from Worldliness

Doctrine and Covenants 59:9 states, "And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments

upon my holy day." Modern prophets and apostles have taught that the idea of keeping ourselves "unspotted from the world" is both an invitation and a promised blessing that work hand in hand.

For example, President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught that as we avoid worldly distractions on the Sabbath day, we are blessed with protection from obsession with worldly things: "In this day of increasing access to and preoccupation with materialism, there is a sure protection for ourselves and our children against the plagues of our day. The key to that sure protection surprisingly can be found in Sabbath observance."<sup>4</sup>

### Quality Family Time

The Olson family in Brigham City, Utah, USA, found that even changing one small aspect of their Sabbath day brings about great blessings. Instead of watching regular television on Sunday, they focus on Church-sponsored media. They found that watching the Bible videos (see BibleVideos.org) with their children invites the Spirit as well as questions from the kids that prompt good family discussions.

"Not watching TV on the Sabbath led to the biggest shift in focus for me," said Sister Lacey Olson. "We might feel like there are so many rules with regards to Sunday, but I think the Sabbath is a day unrestricted with regards to service and charity. If we choose, the Sabbath day can arm us with rejuvenation to face the world in the following week."

The Lord teaches us in the scriptures that we should "remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). When we recognize the Sabbath as a precious opportunity to claim spiritual blessings, those words become an invitation from Him. How will we respond? What promises are in store for ourselves and our families? ■

#### NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "The Sabbath Is a Delight," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 129.
2. Cheryl A. Esplin, "The Sacrament—a Renewal for the Soul," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 13.
3. L. Tom Perry, "The Sabbath and the Sacrament," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 9.
4. James E. Faust, "The Lord's Day," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 35.