

# Faith, Service, and a Loaf of Bread

By Nissanka (Nissh) Muthu Mudalige

I moved to Armenia from Sri Lanka to attend school in 2007, met the missionaries, and was baptized the next year. After my baptism I yearned to serve a full-time mission. I wasn't able to because I was over 25; however, the mission president called me to serve a mini-mission. My responsibilities included working with the other elders and preaching the gospel. I loved it.

## A Test of Courage

At the same time, money was tight. Then my father's business collapsed, and he could no longer send me money. I had just enough for a few days' food. My university was close to my residence, but the mission office was a 30-minute bus ride. The trip there and back cost me 200 drams (about U.S.\$0.50).

I still wanted to magnify my missionary service. When an elder called me to visit a few members with him and asked that we meet at the Central

Branch building—over 40 minutes from me by bus—I said yes, even though I had only enough money to buy one loaf of bread. I walked to the Central Branch building. It was a hot summer day, so I had to rest and drink water along the way. It took over two hours before I finally arrived. On the two-hour walk back home, I spent my last coin on bread.

## A Greater Test

Soon after arriving home, I received a phone call from the same elder. He said, "Nissh, I am sorry to call you again, but one of the members is sick. Could you come and be my companion while I give her a blessing?" I wanted to tell him that I was too tired after walking four hours in the heat, but my heart didn't let me. My faith gave me strength and courage, so I said I would go.

Right then my roommate came in. I asked him if I could borrow enough money to get me to the mission office.

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old woman's smile.**

He said that he had only money to buy food until the end of the month, so he couldn't loan me any.

Suddenly, my eye focused on the bread I had just purchased sitting on the table, fresh—the only food I had. I picked it up and said, "I just bought this bread; can you take it and give me a 100 dram?" He smiled and said he would. I took the money and rode the bus to the mission office.



We visited that Church member, an older woman who was bedridden. She could hardly open her eyes to look at us, but she smiled at me. She talked to me specifically, reminiscing on memories from earlier in her life. She was so happy to see us in her home. Together, the elder and I gave her a blessing. She gave us another smile, and I could see the light in her face. Her daughter mentioned that our visit was the first time in many months that she had seen her mother smile.

I again walked another two hours back home, but this time I didn't feel tired. The only thing I could think of was the smile of the old woman and our conversation. I felt Heavenly

Father had wanted me to visit her; maybe that was what she needed to have greater happiness during some of her last days. I felt very grateful for my opportunity to participate in that visit. I asked Heavenly Father to bless that woman. I also asked Him to bless me with daily food during my difficult financial time.

### **Blessings from Above**

God didn't leave me alone. My friend shared his food with me that month. I never went to bed hungry, even though I didn't have even a penny in my pocket. I walked to the mission office every day—and I never felt tired. The sacrifice made me happy.

That month I received many lunch and dinner invitations. One day my roommate and I were both destitute and had only a small loaf of bread for breakfast. That evening we were so hungry. We walked down the street to try to borrow money from a friend when a car stopped with two native Armenians inside. The men asked us where we were from. After we said we were from Sri Lanka, they invited us to their home for dinner. They loved hearing all about Sri Lanka and we had a wonderful dinner.

I love my Heavenly Father and all the blessings He gives to me continually. He is there to help me, and I feel His loving care for me every day. ■

*The author lives in Armenia.*