

Preparing to Serve, SERVING TO PREPARE

God gave you the Aaronic Priesthood because He has a work for you—now and in the future.



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Jonathan is a friend of mine who joined the Church four years ago. He is the only member of the Church in his family. After he received the Aaronic Priesthood, he began serving others as he had never served before. Jonathan knew that to serve, he needed to learn a lot. He also wanted to be worthy and more dependable, so he studied the gospel, prayed, and attended his Sunday meetings and seminary. He worked hard to keep the commandments and Church standards. He diligently fulfilled his priesthood duties, including being a great home teacher. His *Duty to God* book helped him understand those duties and learn how to fulfill them.

Jonathan's faithful priesthood service gave him spiritual strength. It helped protect him from evil influences. He grew tremendously as he served and prepared for his future. This past year, he worthily received the Melchizedek Priesthood and the temple endowment. He is now serving a mission in Brazil.

The Aaronic Priesthood is often called the "preparatory priesthood." God gave you the Aaronic Priesthood because He has a work for you—now and in the future. Your faithful service in the Aaronic Priesthood prepares you for even greater opportunities to serve in the coming years. Like Jonathan, you

are preparing to "receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, to receive the blessings of the temple, to serve a full-time mission, to be a loving husband and father, and to continue in lifelong service to the Lord" (*True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 4).

You may not know all of the details of the wonderful opportunities Heavenly Father has in store for you, but I am confident that you will be prepared to meet them if you remember to do the following as an Aaronic Priesthood holder.

Follow Jesus Christ

As a priesthood holder, you are a representative of Jesus Christ. That means you are asked to follow Him and to do what He would do. What would He do? In every situation, He devoted His life to serving and blessing others. So should you. Give yourself in service to others—and then grow and improve so that there is more of yourself to give! Remember how Jesus grew in His youth: He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

Part of following the Savior is becoming wise and physically healthy in your youth. This requires you to work hard and always do your best (see D&C 4:2). You gain favor with God



AARONIC PRIESTHOOD HOLDERS:

HOW CAN I PREPARE TO:

Follow Jesus Christ through

- daily prayer and gospel study.
- obedience.
- seeking God's will.

Administer priesthood ordinances, such as

- blessing the sacrament.
- baptizing others.

Minister always by

- strengthening family and quorum members.
- rescuing less-active members.
- serving the needy.

Receive the Melchizedek Priesthood?

Receive temple blessings?

Serve a mission?

Become a husband and father?





As a priesthood holder, you are a representative of Jesus Christ. In every situation, He devoted His life to serving and blessing others. So should you.

as you draw close to Him through daily prayer, gospel study, obedience, and service. You gain favor with others as you are kind and loyal to your family and a Christlike friend to all.

Remember that Jesus always did the will of the Father. You follow Christ when you seek God's will throughout the day to guide your service and act on the spiritual promptings you receive.

Administer Priesthood Ordinances

Priesthood ordinances are necessary for all of God's children and bless both His sons and daughters equally. From the moment you become a deacon, you help administer in a priesthood ordinance by passing the sacrament. You'll continue to administer priesthood ordinances in the Aaronic Priesthood later as you prepare and bless the sacrament, baptize, and participate in the ordination of other Aaronic Priesthood holders.

To participate in sacred ordinances, you must be clean. Your moral cleanliness can add great spiritual power to the ordinances you administer. Strive to be worthy in every way to bear the sacred vessels of the Lord's sacrament (see D&C 38:42). When you do, you can stand before your ward or branch members as a true representative of Jesus Christ. They will be blessed by your determination to keep the covenants you are helping them renew.

Minister Always

As an Aaronic Priesthood holder, you minister. At all times, seek opportunities

to minister to your family, friends, quorum members, and others. Everything you do in the priesthood helps you minister to others both physically and spiritually. For example, when you help your bishop or branch president by serving a family you home teach, you're learning how to identify and take care of others' needs. You'll also minister to others as you reach out to strengthen your quorum members and rescue the less-active, gather fast offerings to help the poor and needy, perform physical labor for the sick and disabled, teach and testify of Christ and His gospel, and lighten the burdens of the discouraged.

You minister as you teach lessons in your quorum meetings and in your family home evenings. You minister as you invite all to come unto Christ (see D&C 20:59)—at home, in your quorum, at school, with the full-time missionaries, and wherever else you are.

Your Future

Discuss with your parents or advisers what will be required of you in your future roles as a Melchizedek Priesthood holder, missionary, husband, and father. Write in the space provided some of those great responsibilities and how you can prepare for them today as you serve in the Aaronic Priesthood. It may seem overwhelming now, but remember that the best way to prepare is simply to do what Heavenly Father has asked you to do today. May you find happiness as you serve now and prepare for your glorious future. **NE**