



By Kenneth Hurst

# PRAYER

## in the Projection Booth

*I thought I had the answer, but I felt differently when I prayed.*

**M**y senior year in high school brought me an experience that taught me much about obedience and prayer. I had joined the Church about six months previously, and now I had my first job with a regular paycheck: I was the projectionist at the downtown movie theater. I loved movies, and getting a salary for showing movies was like getting paid for having fun. Also, the job required my strict attention only about 5 minutes out of every 20, when it was time to change reels. As long as the film didn't break or something else didn't require my attention, I was free during most of my time in the projection booth to read, do schoolwork, or simply enjoy the movie.

The job had its downsides. One was that I would be required to work on Sunday nights.

After some weeks on the job I could tell that my spirituality was declining. I was becoming moody and depressed. My schoolwork suffered. But I still thought I had a wonderful job, and I didn't want to give it up.

I asked my boss, Mr. Harper, if I could have Sundays off. He told me that Sunday was their biggest day, and he couldn't spare me. A coworker agreed to work in my place on some Sundays. I thought that would be a great help, but my dark feelings, as well as my grades, continued to get worse.

Then I had what I thought was a brilliant idea. I would give what I earned on Sundays to the Church as a special donation. I'd even add an extra 10 percent for good measure. Since I wouldn't be profiting from my Sunday work, surely the Lord would accept my sacrifice and give His blessing to my activities.

I found myself praying while I was alone in the projection booth one night. "What should I do?" I asked aloud. "Should I keep going as I am now? Should I quit? Should I donate my Sunday earnings?" I truly wanted to know, and my questions were sincere.

When I asked if I should quit, I felt a warmth stir inside me. Was that an answer? If it was, I didn't think it made sense. Why would the Lord refuse my offering of my





## HOW PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED

☞ [Heavenly Father] will reply [to your prayer] in one of *three* ways. First, you can feel the peace, comfort, and assurance that confirm that your decision is right. Or second, you can sense that unsettled feeling, the stupor of thought, indicating that your choice is wrong. Or third—and this is the difficult one—you can feel no response.

“What do you do when you have prepared carefully, have prayed fervently, waited a reasonable time for a response, and still do not feel an answer? You may want to express thanks when that occurs, for it is an evidence of His trust. When you are living worthily and your choice is consistent with the Savior’s teachings and you need to act, proceed with trust.”

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 10.

Sunday earnings? Surely, I thought, He would consider my sacrifice the best possible option. I must have misunderstood what I felt. (If I had remembered that Heavenly Father prefers obedience over sacrifice, I would not have been so confused [see 1 Samuel 15:22].)

I stayed at the job. I added my Sunday earnings to what I was already paying for tithing and fast offerings. I thought I was doing the right thing. Why wasn’t I feeling better? After several weeks of soul-searching I concluded that I had chosen to do what I wanted to do when I decided to stay on the job, even though it violated the Lord’s commandments. I wouldn’t get better until what I wanted to do matched what the Lord wanted me to do. I enjoyed being a movie projectionist, but I wanted to enjoy being a good Latter-day Saint more. I found someone to recommend as my replacement, and I gave Mr. Harper my two weeks’ notice.

Around this time my priests quorum class discussed what the Lord told Oliver Cowdery

about answers to prayer: “You must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right” (D&C 9:8).

When I thought about my prayer in the projection booth, I realized that what I had felt when I had asked if I should quit was that promised burning in the bosom. At the time I either hadn’t recognized it for what it was, or I hadn’t had faith that it came from God. Now I knew it had come from Him. I promised myself I wouldn’t be past feeling His words again (see 1 Nephi 17:45). **NE**

