

FOR YOUNG WOMEN: MAKING THE MISSION DECISION

Will a mission be right for you? If so, how will you know?

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An unprecedented wave of enthusiasm for missionary work is sweeping the entire earth,” said Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (“Catch the Wave,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 45). You’ve felt that wave, and you’ve likely wondered, “Will I serve a full-time mission?”

But you shouldn’t worry about deciding now whether to serve a full-time mission in the future. Instead, remember the First Presidency’s counsel to “take advantage of your time in Young Women by preparing to receive the sacred ordinances of the temple, to become a faithful wife and mother, and to strengthen your home and family” (*Young Women Personal Progress* [2010], 1). Let that counsel influence your goals, and let your enthusiasm for the wave of missionary work be focused on sharing the gospel as a member missionary today.

Then when you’re old enough to consider a full-time mission, you can decide based on your situation at the time. After all, a lot can change in your late teens and early twenties to influence your choice, including opportunities for marriage and motherhood, education, and other service. So when that time arrives, how will you know if a full-time mission is right for you? Here are some things to think about.



HOW WILL MY ANSWER COME?

As with praying about any question, there is great value in understanding and following the principles in Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–9 and 8:2–3—study it out. Counsel with your parents and priesthood leaders, decide what you think is best for your circumstances, and then ask Heavenly Father to either confirm your choice or help you know it’s not the right decision. Be open to His will and timing for you, even if the answer is not what you’d hoped or expected (see Bible Dictionary, “Prayer”).

Some answers might include:

- Yes, you want to serve, and now you’re called to the work (see D&C 4:3).
- Yes, even though you never thought you’d serve a full-time mission, it feels like it’s Heavenly Father’s plan for you at this time in your life.
- Yes, it will be right to serve in the near future, so prepare diligently, but wait a little longer for the right timing.
 - No, it’s not right at this time, but it may be in a few years.
 - No, Heavenly Father has a different plan for you, even if serving a full-time mission is something you’d like to do.
 - No, you don’t want to serve a full-time mission, and you don’t need to.
 - No response at all—perhaps this is one of those times when Heavenly Father is leaving the decision up to you because He trusts your choice.

Advice from an RM

A young woman asked a returned sister missionary about her decision to serve and what she did to prepare. Watch the interview at [lds.org/go/03Advice](https://www.lds.org/go/03Advice).

If you receive the last response, remember this advice from Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“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. . . . When you are living righteously and are acting with trust, God will not let you proceed too far without a warning impression if you have made the wrong decision” (“Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 10).

I WON’T TURN 19 FOR SEVERAL MORE YEARS. SHOULD I BE PREPARING TODAY FOR A FULL-TIME MISSION?

This question might be easier to answer if you think more about preparing to share the gospel than about preparing to serve a full-time mission. If you’re preparing today to be better at *sharing the gospel*, then you’ll be wonderfully prepared if you do serve a mission. But even if you don’t serve a mission, you’ll still be a blessing to those around you right now as you perform member missionary work to help bring others to the gospel or help rescue those who have become less active. Your preparation will also help you teach your children if you’re blessed to become a mother in the future.

As you prepare to better share the gospel today, consider studying *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004; available at [lds.org/go/03Preach](https://www.lds.org/go/03Preach)). This book is not just for full-time missionaries; many Church leaders have encouraged every member to read it (see, for example, Elder L. Tom Perry, “The Past Way of Facing the Future,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 75–76).

TRUST IN THE LORD

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Proverbs 3:5–6



DO I NEED TO SERVE A MISSION?

President Thomas S. Monson has made it clear that “missionary work is a priesthood duty. . . . We assure the young sisters of the Church, however, that they make a valuable contribution as missionaries, and we welcome their service” (“Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 5).

There is no requirement for young women to serve a mission, so you don’t need to feel guilty for choosing not to be a full-time missionary. Follow the Spirit as you plan for and live your life, and Heavenly Father will provide many opportunities for you to serve His children in your home, community, and the world, whether that includes full-time missionary service or not.

WHAT ARE THE REASONS I SHOULD CONSIDER SERVING?

If your desire to serve a mission comes mainly because you’ve heard that you gain a strong testimony, that you may get to visit cool places, or that you might learn a foreign language—in short, that you know a mission will bless *your* life—then a mission may not be the right option for you yet. That motivation would definitely lead you to receive great blessings, but there’s an even better motivation for serving a mission: to “invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59).

The First Presidency taught: “Every missionary has an important role in helping ‘to bring to pass the

immortality and eternal life of man’ (Moses 1:39)” (*Preach My Gospel*, v). If *that* gets you excited, then you’re getting to the heart of a missionary’s purpose.

WOULD I EVEN MAKE A GOOD MISSIONARY?

Perhaps you’re shy or feel like you’re not a scriptorian. Does that mean you shouldn’t serve a mission? Not at all. To you, President Monson has said: “Some of you may be shy by nature or consider yourselves inadequate to respond affirmatively to the call to serve. Remember that this is the Lord’s work, and when we are on the Lord’s errand, we are entitled to the Lord’s help. The Lord will shape the back to bear the burden placed upon it” (“The Lord Needs Missionaries,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2011, 4).

The qualities that will help you be a successful missionary include following and teaching with the Spirit, loving others, obeying the commandments, developing Christlike attributes, working hard, and serving others (see *Preach My Gospel*, 10–11). These qualities will not only bless you if you decide to serve a mission, but they’ll also help you serve the Lord in your home and in the Church throughout your life. Remember that you’ll have divine help to develop these gifts of the Spirit when you pray for them and work toward them (see D&C 46:28). **NE**