

Organization and Purpose of the Family



Organization

The family is sacred in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and is the most important social unit in time and eternity. God has established families to bring happiness to His children, allow them to learn



correct principles in a loving atmosphere, and prepare them for eternal life.

The home is the best place to teach, learn, and apply gospel principles. It is where individuals learn to provide the food, clothing, shelter, and other necessities they need. The father and mother, as equal partners, should help each family member:

- Seek the truth and develop faith in God.
- Repent of sins, be baptized for the remission of sins, become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and receive the Holy Ghost.

- Obey the commandments of God, study the scriptures diligently, offer personal prayers daily, and serve others.
- Share the gospel with others.
- Be endowed and be married in the temple to a worthy companion for eternity, create a happy home for the family, and support the family by love and sacrifice.



- Search for information about deceased ancestors and perform temple ordinances for them.



- Provide the nourishment required for spiritual, social, physical, and emotional health.

The father presides over the family and is responsible to teach the children and provide the necessities of

life for the family. A worthy and eligible father in the Church has the opportunity to hold the priesthood, which is the power and authority to act in the name of God. With this power and authority, the father becomes the priesthood leader of his family. He leads his family in preparing to return to the presence of our Heavenly Father. His wife is his most important companion, partner, and counselor. Husband and wife should counsel together on all matters that affect the family and home.

The father should provide for the spiritual needs of his family. He should see that they are taught the gospel of Jesus Christ and should do all he can to encourage them and help them obey the Lord's commandments.

A father who holds the priesthood can bless his family members and provide for their spiritual needs. By the authority of the appropriate priesthood and *with authorization from his priesthood leader*, the father can:

1. Name and bless children.
2. Baptize children (and others).
3. Confirm children (and others) members of the Church and confer upon them the Holy Ghost.
4. Confer the priesthood upon his sons (and others) and ordain them to offices in the priesthood.
5. Bless and pass the sacrament.
6. Dedicate graves.

Without authorization from his priesthood leader, a father who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood can consecrate oil and bless members of his family and others when they are ill and give them special blessings at other times when the need arises. (See pages 18–25 in this guidebook for instructions on performing priesthood ordinances and blessings.)

The father is to see that his family is actively involved in three basic responsibilities:

1. Personal and family spiritual and temporal preparedness.
2. Sharing the gospel.
3. Family history and temple ordinances for the living and the dead.

The mother is an equal partner and counselor to her husband. She helps him teach their children the laws of God. If there is no father in the home, the mother presides over the family.

The father and mother must be one in purpose. Their goal should be to prepare all members of the family to return to our Heavenly Father. They should be united as they work toward this goal. The Lord has established the Church to help fathers and mothers teach and take care of their families.

When children come into the family, parents are to love them, teach them the truths of the gospel, and be examples of righteous living. Children are to learn and keep the commandments

of God. They are to honor and obey their parents.

The strength of the Church depends on families and individuals who live the gospel of Jesus Christ. The extent to which a family enjoys the blessings of the gospel depends largely on how well the father and the mother understand and perform their basic duties as parents. The Church never intends to give programs or responsibilities to fathers and mothers that will overwhelm or discourage them or cause them to neglect these most basic duties.

Purpose

Because our Heavenly Father loves us, He wants us to become exalted as He is. To help us, He has given us a plan to follow based on divine laws of truth. Those who learn about the plan and follow it faithfully can someday become like our Father in Heaven and enjoy the kind of life He lives.

Part of the plan was for us to leave heaven and come to earth. Here we gain a physical body, learn through experiences, and prove ourselves worthy to live again in the presence of God. We prove ourselves worthy by freely choosing to keep His laws. (See Abraham 3:23–25; 2 Nephi 2:27.)

To help us prepare ourselves for life with Him, our Heavenly Father has organized us into families. Through sacred ordinances and covenants, our families can be united eternally.