A group of young women once asked me, “What do you wish you had known when you were our age?” If I were to answer that question now, I would include this thought: “I wish when I was your age I had understood the significance of the sacrament better than I did. I wish I had understood the sacrament in the way that Elder Jeffrey R. Holland described. He said, ‘One of the invitations inherent in the sacramental ordinance is that it be a truly spiritual experience, a holy communion, a renewal for the soul.’”

How can the sacrament “be a truly spiritual experience, a holy communion, a renewal for the soul” each week?

The sacrament becomes a spiritually strengthening experience when we listen to the sacrament prayers and recommit to our covenants. To do this, we must be willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ. Speaking of this promise, President Henry B. Eyring taught: “That means we must see ourselves as His. We will put Him first in our lives. We will want what He wants rather than what we want or what the world teaches us to want.”

When we take the sacrament, we also covenant to “always remember” Jesus Christ. On the night before He was crucified, Christ gathered His Apostles around Him and instituted the sacrament. He broke bread, blessed it, and said, “Take, eat; this is in remembrance of my body which I give a ransom for you.”

Next He took a cup of wine, gave thanks, gave it to His Apostles to drink, and said, “This is in remembrance of my blood . . . , which is shed for as many as shall believe on my name.”

Among the Nephites and again at the Restoration of His Church in the latter days, He repeated that we are to take the sacrament in remembrance of Him.

As we partake of the sacrament, we witness to God that we will remember His Son always, not just during the brief sacrament ordinance. This means that we will constantly look to the Savior’s example and teachings to guide our thoughts, our choices, and our acts.

The sacrament prayer also reminds us that we must “keep his commandments.”

Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” The sacrament gives us an opportunity for introspection and an opportunity to turn our heart and will to God. Obedience to the commandments brings the power of the gospel into our lives and greater peace and spirituality.

The sacrament provides a time for a truly spiritual experience as we reflect upon the Savior’s redeeming and enabling power through His Atonement. A Young Women leader recently learned about the strength we receive as we strive to thoughtfully partake of the sacrament. Working to complete a requirement in Personal Progress, she set a goal to focus on the words in the sacrament hymns and prayers.

Each week, she conducted a self-evaluation during the sacrament. She
recalled mistakes she had made, and she committed to be better the next week. She was grateful to be able to make things right and be made clean. Looking back on the experience, she said, "I was acting on the repentance part of the Atonement."

One Sunday after her self-evaluation, she began to feel gloomy and pessimistic. She could see that she was making the same errors over and over again, week to week. But then she had a distinct impression that she was neglecting a big part of the Atonement—Christ's enabling power. She was forgetting all the times the Savior helped her be who she needed to be and serve beyond her own capacity.

With this in mind, she reflected again on the previous week. She said: "A feeling of joy broke through my melancholy as I noted that He had given me many opportunities and abilities. I noted with gratitude the ability I had to recognize my child's need when it wasn't obvious. I noted that on a day when I felt I could not pack in one more thing to do, I was able to offer strengthening words to a friend. I had shown patience in a circumstance that usually elicited the opposite from me."

She concluded: "As I thanked God for the Savior's enabling power in my life, I felt so much more optimistic toward the repentance process I was working through and I looked to the next week with renewed hope."

Elder Melvin J. Ballard taught how the sacrament can be a healing and cleansing experience. He said: "Now, when the multitude had all eaten and drunk, behold, they were filled with the Spirit." 14

With these words, Christ teaches us that the Spirit heals and renews our souls. The promised blessing of the sacrament is that we will "always have his Spirit to be with [us]." 15

When I partake of the sacrament, I sometimes picture in my mind a painting that depicts the resurrected Savior with His arms outstretched, as if He is ready to receive us into His loving embrace. I love this painting. When I think about it during the administration of the sacrament, my soul is lifted as I can almost hear the Savior's words: "Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive; and blessed are those who come unto me." 16

Aaronic Priesthood holders represent the Savior when they prepare, bless, and pass the sacrament. As a priesthood holder extends his arm to offer us the sacred emblems, it is as if the Savior Himself were extending His arm of mercy, inviting each one of us to partake of the precious gifts of love made available through His atoning sacrifice—gifts of repentance, forgiveness, comfort, and hope. 17
Rescue in Unity

In order to assist the Savior, we have to work together in unity and in harmony. Everyone, every position, and every calling is important.

We often hear President Thomas S. Monson say, “Reach out to rescue.” An account in the New Testament comes to my mind. It is a perfect illustration of how members and missionaries can work together in unity through ward councils to reach out and rescue. The story is found in Mark 2:1–5. I find that the experiences Jesus used to teach us certain doctrines or principles are always most inspiring and easy to understand.

One of the characters in this account is a man with palsy, someone who was not able to move without assistance. This man could only stay home, waiting for rescue.

In our day, it might happen like this. Four people were fulfilling an assignment from their bishop to visit, at his home, a man who was sick with palsy. I can visualize one of them coming from the Relief Society, one from the elders quorum, one from the Aaronic Priesthood, and, last but not least, one full-time missionary. In the most recent ward council, after counseling together about the needs in the ward, the bishop had given out “rescuing” assignments. These four were assigned to help this man suffering with palsy. They could not wait for him to come to church by himself. They had to go to his home and visit him. They had to seek him out, and so they went. The man was being brought to Jesus.

“And they [came] unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four” (Mark 2:3).

However, the room was too crowded. They could not get in...