

# PREPARING FOR **GENERAL CONFERENCE**

*Our family learned that studying general conference can invite the Spirit into our lives on a daily basis.*

**By Mark A. Barrionuevo**

**M**y family and I find that the best way to prepare for the next general conference is by immersing ourselves in the counsel given in the previous one. When my wife has a free moment, she reads the conference issue of the *Ensign*. Then she strives to apply the teachings she learns. For example, she told me that Elder David A. Bednar's talk on improving the quality of our prayers has helped her more earnestly seek charity in raising our two rambunctious sons.<sup>1</sup>

Reviewing the last conference is something I try to do too. As I walk to school each morning, I listen to one address and then ponder and pray, allowing the teachings of the prophets to settle in my heart and mind. I converse with Heavenly Father regarding my upcoming day and my responsibilities as a husband, father, Latter-day Saint, student, and citizen.

One morning Elder L. Tom Perry's talk "Let Him Do It with Simplicity" felt especially pertinent to my circumstances.<sup>2</sup> Elder Perry applied the principles taught by Henry David Thoreau in *Walden* to simplifying our lives by fueling spirituality and obtaining relief from the stress of the

world. Because of the demands of my schooling, family outings for us are precious and rare. One summer prior to Elder Perry's address, however, we visited Walden Pond, spending a reflective moment inside a re-creation of Thoreau's cabin. We made the most of that afternoon by wading in Walden Pond and building sand castles on the beach. After returning home, our family thanked Heavenly Father for His creations that we had enjoyed together.

Months later as I trudged down snow-covered sidewalks, I recalled that sweet summer day. As a result of that experience and Elder Perry's message, I more clearly understood how spending time with my family is crucial to living a deliberate gospel-centered life.

In addition to listening to talks individually, on Sunday mornings our family listens to a conference talk on our computer as we get ready for church. Once my wife and I even found our four-year-old asking our younger son to be quiet so he could listen to President Thomas S. Monson.

The teachings of our Savior through the mouths of modern prophets are a blessing to our family. Seeking to include the prophets, seers, and revelators in our daily lives has opened the



way for the Holy Ghost to become our constant guide. We indeed echo the words of the hymn: “We thank thee, O God, for a prophet.”<sup>3</sup>

By frequently studying the counsel given in general conference, my wife and I have a stronger grasp on the recent teachings of the Lord by the time the next general conference

comes around. We are spiritually edified and are more fully prepared to receive His current teachings through His servants the prophets. ■

#### NOTES

1. See David A. Bednar, “Pray Always,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 41–44.
2. See L. Tom Perry, “Let Him Do It with Simplicity,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 7–10.
3. “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet,” *Hymns*, no. 19.

## FOCUSING ON CONFERENCE

In addition to studying past conference addresses, consider these ideas to help you learn from the current conference:

- Pray and fast to receive answers to your prayers through the words of the speakers.
- Approach conference with specific questions in mind.
- Complete all chores, shopping, and other errands before conference so you can focus on listening.
- Get good rest the nights before conference so your mind will be ready to receive inspiration.
- Take notes of the impressions, promptings, and insights you receive.

## MORE ON THIS TOPIC

The following articles are available at LDS.org:

1. Paul V. Johnson, “The Blessings of General Conference,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 50–52.
2. “Preparing Our Children for General Conference,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2009, 23–27.