

Ministering Principles

MAKING MINISTERING Joyful

Serving with love brings joy to both the giver and the receiver.

Sometimes our search for happiness in this life can seem like running on a treadmill. We run and run and still feel like we haven't gotten anywhere. For some, the thought of ministering to others simply feels like adding more to do.

But our Heavenly Father wants us to experience joy and has told us “men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). And the Savior taught that ministering to others is an essential part of how we bring joy into our lives and the lives of others.

What Is Joy?

Joy can be described as “a feeling of great pleasure and happiness.”¹ Latter-day prophets have provided important clarification on where joy comes from and how it is found. “The joy we feel has little to do with the circumstances of our lives and everything to do with the focus of our lives,” said President Russell M. Nelson. “. . . Joy comes from and because of Him. He is the source of all joy.”²



Ministering Brings Joy

When Lehi partook of the fruit of the tree of life, his soul was filled “with exceedingly great joy” (1 Nephi 8:12). His first desire was to share this fruit with those he loved.

Our willingness to minister to others can bring this kind of joy to us and to them. The Savior taught His disciples that the fruit we bring forth when we are connected to Him helps bring us a fulness of joy (see John 15:1–11). Doing His work by serving and seeking to bring others to Him can be a joyful experience (see Luke 15:7; Alma 29:9; Doctrine and Covenants 18:16; 50:22). We can experience this joy even in the face of opposition

and suffering (see 2 Corinthians 7:4; Colossians 1:11).

The Savior showed us the perfect example that one of the greatest sources of true joy in mortal life is found through service. When we minister to our brothers and sisters like the Savior, with charity and love in our hearts, we can experience joy that goes beyond simple happiness.

“As we embrace [ministering] with willing hearts, we will . . . be closer to becoming a Zion people and will feel surpassing joy with those whom we have helped along the path of discipleship,” taught Sister Jean B. Bingham, Relief Society General President.³

A SOURCE OF TRUE JOY

The Savior showed us the perfect example that true joy in mortal life can be found through service.



How Can We Make Ministering More Joyful?

There are many ways to bring greater joy into our ministering. Here are a few ideas:

1. **Understand your purpose in ministering.** There are many reasons to minister. Ultimately, our efforts should align with God's purposes "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). As we accept President Russell M. Nelson's invitation to help others along the covenant path, we can find joy in participating in God's work.⁴ (For more on the purpose of ministering, see "Ministering Principles: The Purpose That Will Change Our Ministering" in the January 2019 *Ensign*.)
2. **Make ministering about people, not tasks.** President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) often reminded us, "Never let a problem to be solved become more important than a person to be loved."⁵ Ministering is about loving people, not about things to do. As we grow to love as the Savior did, we will be more open to the joy that comes from serving others.
3. **Make ministering simple.** President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,

tells us: "Great things are wrought through simple and small things. . . . Our small and simple acts of kindness and service will accumulate into a life filled with love for Heavenly Father, devotion to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a sense of peace and joy each time we reach out to one another."⁶

4. **Take the stress out of ministering.** It's not your responsibility to work out someone's salvation. That's between the individual and the Lord. Our responsibility is to love them and help them turn to Jesus Christ, who is their Savior.

Don't Put Off the Joy of Service

Sometimes people are reluctant to ask for needed help, so offering our service could be just what they need. But serving without asking isn't always the answer, either. When you notice a need, asking permission before ministering is a good idea.

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles told about a single mother who got chicken pox—and then her children got sick too. The normally spotless house became cluttered and messy. Dishes and laundry piled up.

In a moment when she felt completely overwhelmed, Relief Society sisters knocked on her door. They didn't say, "Let us know if we can help." When they saw the situation, they sprang into action.

"They cleared up the chaos, brought light and clarity into the home, and called a friend to bring over some much-needed groceries. When they at last finished their work and said their good-byes, they left that young mother in tears—tears of gratitude and love."⁷

Both the givers and the receiver felt the warmth of joy.

Cultivate Joy in Your Life

The more joy, peace, and contentment we can cultivate in our lives, the more we will be able to share with others as we minister. Joy comes through the Holy Ghost (see Galatians 5:22 and Doctrine and Covenants 11:13). It is something we can pray for (see Doctrine and Covenants 136:29) and invite into our lives. Here are a few ideas for cultivating joy in our own lives:

1. **Count your blessings.** As you examine your life, write in your journal the things that God has blessed you with.⁸ Take notice of the good all around you.⁹ Pay attention to what things might be keeping you from feeling joy and write down ways to resolve or better understand them. During this Easter season, take time to search for a greater connection with the Savior (see Doctrine and Covenants 101:36).
2. **Practice mindfulness.** Joy can find you more easily in moments of quiet meditation.¹⁰ Listen closely to what brings you joy (see 1 Chronicles 16:15). Time away from media can sometimes be necessary to practice mindfulness.¹¹
3. **Avoid comparing yourself.** It has been said that comparison is the thief of joy. Paul warned that those “measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Corinthians 10:12).
4. **Seek personal revelation.** The Savior taught, “If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal” (Doctrine and Covenants 42:61).

Invitation to Act

How can you increase the joy you find in your life through ministering? ■

The principles in this article can be applied in our everyday interactions but are intended to help ministering brothers and sisters in their efforts to bless the individuals and families assigned to them.

NOTES

1. “Joy,” en.oxforddictionaries.com.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Joy and Spiritual Survival,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 82.
3. Jean B. Bingham, “Ministering as the Savior Does,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 107.
4. See Russell M. Nelson, “As We Go Forward Together,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2018, 4–7.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “Finding Joy in the Journey,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 86.
6. M. Russell Ballard, “Finding Joy through Loving Service,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 49.
7. See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Living the Gospel Joyful,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 120–23.
8. See Henry B. Eyring, “O Remember, Remember,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 67.
9. See Jean B. Bingham, “That Your Joy Might Be Full,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 87.
10. See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Things That Matter Most,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 21.
11. See Gary E. Stevenson, “Spiritual Eclipse,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 46.

