

# Ministering Principles

## MINISTERING THROUGH SELF-RELIANCE

*Helping others become self-reliant is providing and ministering in the Lord's way.*

**M**any of our family members, friends, and neighbors are interested in becoming more self-reliant. Using the Church's self-reliance initiative, Church members are finding opportunities to serve, care, and minister as they bless others with principles that bring "greater hope, peace, and progress."<sup>1</sup>

### "I Was Home"

By Chrissy Kepler, Arizona, USA

I was struggling financially following a divorce, trying to find my way back into the workforce after being a stay-at-home mom for eight years. I was also struggling spiritually, seeking truth and faith, though I had not set foot inside a chapel since I was a teenager.

One Sunday I was doing my laundry at the home of my oldest sister, Priscilla, an active member of the Church. While I was there, Priscilla invited me to attend church with her family—my first invitation in over 15 years.

I was reluctant at first, but just the night before, I had pleaded with God to show me how to get closer to Him. After feeling an internal tug, I concluded, "Why not go to hear and see for yourself as an adult with your own heart and eyes?"

While we were at sacrament meeting, I noticed a flyer in the Sunday bulletin announcing a self-reliance course on personal finances. I wasn't ready to return to church, but I felt drawn to the 12-week course. With encouragement from my sister and brother-in-law, I signed up, expecting to learn only how to make a budget and pay off debt. The classes, however, transformed me spiritually.

I had been surprised by the spiritual messages the first couple of weeks of class, but during the third class, I was overwhelmed with a feeling of confirmation that I was home and hearing new but familiar truths. I left the class and drove straight to see Priscilla. In tears, I asked her, "How do I get more of this feeling in my life?" She arranged for the missionaries to start teaching me.







### **INVITE, ATTEND, STRENGTHEN**

To help Latter-day Saints achieve self-reliance—both financial and spiritual—the Church began its self-reliance initiative in 2014.

After an introductory devotional, attendees choose from four different 12-week courses.

Because self-reliance groups operate as a council, they offer an excellent opportunity to minister to others' financial, educational, professional, and spiritual needs. Group members learn from, counsel with, and support one another. They also share ideas and are accountable to each other.

Pray about which family members, friends, or neighbors you could invite to a self-reliance course, and attend with them. Remember that principles of self-reliance can bless all of God's children, regardless of whether they are members of the Church or not.

Members of my self-reliance class came to my missionary lessons and supported me. They made a lasting impact on my spirituality and helped me develop a testimony of the gospel and modern-day prophets.

In the time it took me to complete the course, I made several temporal and spiritual changes. I started a new career with a good company, and I paid off several loans.

But the deeper, sweeter blessings that came from the course included creating beautiful friendships, developing a positive relationship with an encouraging bishop, finding a testimony of tithing, receiving my temple recommend, being endowed, and seeing my two oldest children get baptized.

My path to self-reliance is still unfolding, but for the rest of my journey, I will cherish the lessons I've learned and the friendships I've made.

### **"I Left Each Class Feeling Loved"**

When she visited Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, with her 10-year-old son, Vincent, in December 2016, Katie Funk considered herself "comfortably agnostic." She left the Church at age 16, became a single mother at 17, started getting tattoos, and developed a taste for coffee. But during that Temple Square visit, Vincent felt the Holy Ghost and asked his mother if he could take the missionary lessons.

Despite her two-job, 80-hour workweeks, Katie studied the gospel with Vincent, researching answers to his questions between missionary visits. By the summer of 2017, she began attending Church meetings, where she learned about the Church's self-reliance courses.

“I realized they were something that could help me,” she said. “Maybe I wouldn’t need to work two jobs or lean on my parents for the rest of my life.”

Katie called her course “incredibly strengthening temporally and spiritually,” not just because of what she learned but also because of how her self-reliance group accepted and ministered to her. ■

**NOTE**

1. “Message from the First Presidency,” in *Personal Finances for Self-Reliance* (2016), i.

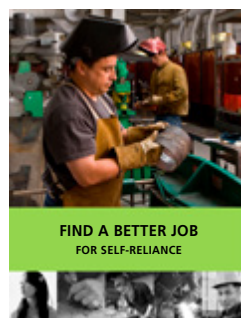
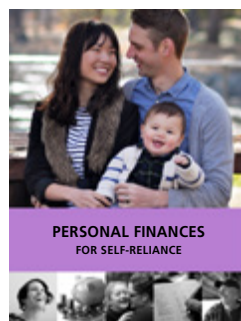
**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

Here are some ideas from Katie for how we can make the Church’s self-reliance initiative an opportunity to minister both spiritually and temporally:

- “I know it’s cliché, but don’t judge a book by its cover. The fact that I was able to go to that course and not feel judged by others was huge.”
- “Give support and encouragement. My group supported me in such a way that I left each class feeling loved.”
- “Share your experience. The honesty and openness we had for each other made our hearts feel better. You never know who’s going to benefit from what you share.”
- “Be vocal. I’m vocal about how my life is much better because I pay my tithing and go to church. I take my *Personal Finances for Self-Reliance* book with me to my job as a behavioral therapist. When appropriate, I share some of its principles with others.”
- “Go to a self-reliance course for yourself, but watch for those who might need your help. I had to miss almost half the classes because of a change in my work schedule, but members of my group stayed in contact and cheered me on. It was amazing to feel that I still belonged even when I couldn’t be there.”

**SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES**

To send us your experiences with ministering to others or being ministered to, go to [ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) and click “Submit an Article or Feedback.”



*These manuals represent four of the Church’s self-reliance courses. For more information, ask your bishop or visit [srs.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://srs.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).*

**MINISTERING THROUGH SELF-RELIANCE**

“Self-reliance is taking responsibility for our own spiritual and temporal welfare *and for those whom Heavenly Father has entrusted to our care*. Only when we are self-reliant can we truly emulate the Savior in serving and blessing others.”

Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “A Gospel Vision of Welfare: Faith in Action,” in *Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance* (booklet, 2009), 1–2; emphasis added.