

Ministering Principles

THE PURPOSE THAT WILL CHANGE OUR MINISTERING

While there are many purposes of ministering, our efforts should be guided by the desire to help others achieve a deeper individual conversion and become more like the Savior.

When we love others as the Savior does, we want to help them as He did. As the Good Shepherd, He is the ultimate example of meaningful ministering.

In modeling our ministering after Him, it is important to remember that His efforts to love, lift, serve, and bless had a higher goal than meeting the immediate need. Certainly He knew of their day-to-day needs and had compassion on their current suffering. So He healed, fed, forgave, and taught. But He wanted to do more than take care of today's thirst (see John 4:13–14). He wanted those around Him to follow Him (see Luke 18:22; John 21:22), know Him (see John 10:14; Doctrine and Covenants 132:22–24), and reach their divine potential (see Matthew 5:48). The same is true today (see Doctrine and Covenants 67:13).

There are countless ways we can help bless others, but when the end goal of our ministering is to help others come to know the Savior and become more like Him, we will be working toward the day when we won't have to teach our neighbor to know the Lord because we will all know Him (see Jeremiah 31:34).





The Savior's Focus Went beyond Immediate Needs

- Several individuals went to great lengths to bring their friend to Jesus to be healed of palsy. In the end the Savior healed the man, but He was more interested in forgiving him of his sins (see Luke 5:18–26).
 - When the people brought to the Savior the woman taken in adultery, His withholding of condemnation saved her life physically. But He wanted to save her spiritually too, telling her to “go, and sin no more” (see John 8:2–11).
 - Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus asking Him to come heal His friend Lazarus. Jesus, who had healed others on countless occasions, delayed His arrival until after Lazarus had died. Jesus knew what the family wanted, but in raising Lazarus from the dead, He strengthened their testimonies of His divinity (see John 11:21–27).

What other examples can you add to this list?



Ministering Principles articles are intended to help us learn to care for one another—not to be shared as messages during visits. As we come to know those we serve, the Holy Ghost will prompt us to know what message they might need in addition to our care and compassion.

What Can We Do?

If our purpose is to help others become more like the Savior, it will change how we minister. Here are some ways this understanding can guide our efforts to minister.

Idea 1: Connect Service with the Savior

All of our efforts to do good are worthwhile, but we can look for opportunities to enhance our service by connecting it with the Savior. For example, if the family you minister to is sick, a meal might be helpful, but your simple expression of love could be multiplied by your testimony of the Savior's love for them. Your help with yardwork would be appreciated, but could perhaps be made more meaningful with the offer of a priesthood blessing.

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “A person with a good heart can help someone fix a tire, take a roommate to the doctor, have lunch with someone who is sad, or smile and say hello to brighten a day.

“But a follower of the first commandment will naturally add to these important acts of service.”¹

Idea 2: Focus on the Covenant Path

Upon speaking to members for the first time as President of the Church, President Russell M. Nelson said, “Keep on the covenant path.” Making and keeping covenants “will open the door to every spiritual blessing and privilege available.”²

As Latter-day Saints, we are baptized, confirmed, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Worthy male members receive the priesthood. We are endowed with power in the temple and are sealed together as families forever. These saving ordinances and their associated covenants are essential for us to become like Him so that we can be with Him.

We can have an important role to play in helping others along that path as we help them keep their covenants and prepare to make future covenants.³ How can you help the individuals or families you serve to receive the next ordinance they need? This could mean helping prepare a father to baptize his daughter, explaining the blessings of the next covenant to be made, or sharing ways to have a more meaningful experience renewing our covenants while partaking of the sacrament.



Idea 3: Invite and Encourage

When it’s appropriate, counsel with those you care for about their conversion and efforts to be more Christlike. Let them know the strengths you see and admire in them. Find out where they feel they could improve and talk about how you could help. (For more on counseling together with those to whom you minister, see “Counsel about Their Needs,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2018, 6–9.)

Don’t be afraid to invite them to follow the Savior and allow Him to help them reach their divine potential. This invitation can be life-changing, when coupled with an expression of your confidence in them and your faith in Him.



Six Ways We Can Help Others Progress toward Christ

Following are suggestions for supporting others in making life improvements and progressing along the covenant path. (See *Preach My Gospel*, chapter 11, for more ideas.)

1. Share. Be authentic and bold when sharing how the Savior has helped you as you have tried to draw nearer to Him by living gospel principles in spite of setbacks.

2. Promise blessings. People need a reason to change that is more compelling than the reasons not to change. Explaining the blessings associated with an action can provide powerful motivation (see Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21).

3. Invite. Living a gospel principle brings a testimony that it is true (see John 7:17) and leads to deeper conversion.⁴ Nearly every interaction could include a simple invitation to do something that would help them progress.

4. Plan together. What needs to happen for them to successfully keep their commitment to change? How can you help? Is there a time line involved?

5. Support. When helpful, develop a support network of people who can help the individual stay motivated and succeed. We all need a cheerleader.

6. Follow up. Share progress regularly. Stay focused on the plan but refine it if necessary. Be patient, persistent, and encouraging. Change can take time.

Invitation to Act

Consider ways your efforts to minister—both large and small—can help others deepen their conversion and become more like the Savior.

Share Your Experiences

Send us your experiences as you have ministered to others or have been ministered to. Go to ensign.lds.org and click “Submit an Article or Feedback.” ■

NOTES

1. Neil L. Andersen, “A Holier Approach to Ministering” (Brigham Young University devotional, Apr. 10, 2018), 3, speeches.byu.edu.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “As We Go Forward Together,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2018, 7.
3. See Henry B. Eyring, “Daughters in the Covenant,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 125–28.
4. See David A. Bednar, “Converted unto the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 106–9.