

HELPING MIRTA RETURN

I was called to serve as a counselor in the Relief Society in my family's new ward. During our presidency meetings, we would go over a list of names of Relief Society sisters in our ward and consider how to help them and their families.

I was drawn to a sister in the ward named Mirta. She had been a member of the Church for many years, but for some reason, Mirta had not been attending for several years.

I noticed that her husband was the elders quorum president but that their children, who were members, did not attend church either. Each Sunday I would see her husband attend alone.

I felt that we needed to help this

family return to church together and enjoy the blessings that the Lord wanted to give them. During the following presidency meetings, I shared my hopes of helping Mirta return to church. We planned activities in which we could include her in a special way, and we identified a few assignments we could give her.

When we visited her, she accepted each one of the assignments and afterward fulfilled them perfectly. We noted that she would eagerly wait to be picked up by one of us for Relief Society activities.

When we organized the visiting teaching companionships as a presidency, I asked the others to consider

the possibility of Mirta and I becoming companions. Each month, without fail, Mirta and I would go visiting teaching. Every time we went out to visit the sisters was an opportunity to talk and get to know each other more.

Each time I invited her to attend church, she would merely say, "When I feel like I'm ready, I'll go." I didn't understand, but I respected her decision. Eventually her answers became, "Maybe I'll go on Sunday."

I would wait for her anxiously every Sunday. She never came, but I continued to keep her in my prayers. A sudden move caused my family to return to where we had previously lived, and I didn't have a chance to say good-bye to Mirta. When we left the ward, she still had not returned to church.

Some months later I was told that Mirta had returned to church and was a counselor in the Relief Society.

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught, "You may never know how much good you accomplish. Someone's life will be blessed by your effort" ("To the Women of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 115).

Many times the results are not what one expects and don't come when anticipated. Let us not cease to labor; this is the Lord's work, and we are His instruments chosen to change the lives of many people. ■

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The Spirit's sweet whispering stilled me: "Buy him some food."

