

Priesthood Responsibilities

ELDER CLAUDIO R. M. COSTA

Of the Presidency of the Seventy

As priesthood holders, we can be a powerful influence in the lives of others.



Elder Andersen, in behalf of the Seventies, I would like to say to you that we love you and we sustain you with our hearts and faith.

My dear brethren, it is a sacred privilege to be part of the royal army of the Lord.¹ I am humbled as I stand before you, imagining you assembled in locations throughout the world.

In the worldwide leadership training meeting held on June 21, 2003, President Gordon B. Hinckley taught us that as priesthood holders we have a fourfold responsibility. He said: “Each of us has a fourfold responsibility. First, we have a responsibility to our families. Second, we have a responsibility to our employers.

Third, we have a responsibility to the Lord’s work. Fourth, we have a responsibility to ourselves.”²

The four areas of responsibility are vitally important.

President Hinckley said: “It is imperative that you not neglect your families. Nothing you have is more precious.”³

It is our responsibility as fathers to lead our families in daily family prayer, daily study of the scriptures, and in family home evening. We must prioritize and preserve these opportunities to build and strengthen the spiritual underpinnings of our families. President Hinckley said: “Try not to let anything interfere. Consider it sacred.”⁴

Concerning family home evening, he said, “Keep Monday night sacred for family home evening.”⁵

Our children, just like their parents, have time demands on them in every aspect of their lives. They have activities involving church and school and friends. Many of our children are attending schools where they are the minority. Frequently the schools schedule events on Monday evenings—activities like sports, rehearsals or practices, choirs, and other events. We need to keep Monday nights free of other commitments so that we can have our family

home evenings. No other activity is more important for our family.

It is during the family home evening and in other family settings that we prepare our children to receive the blessings of the Lord. Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve said: “Ours is the responsibility to ensure that we have family prayer, scripture study, and family home evening. Ours is the responsibility to prepare our children to receive the ordinances of salvation and exaltation.”⁶

Family home evening is a very special time for us to strengthen ourselves and each family member. It is important to include the whole family in assignments for family home evening. A child could share the Primary lesson that he or she had last Sunday. Family home evening strengthened the faith and testimony of my own family.

Daily study of the scriptures is another important family activity. I remember when my son was seven years old. He was taking a shower one night during a storm when we lost the power in our home. My wife called to him and told him to hurry to finish his shower and to then take a candle and come slowly downstairs for our family prayer. She warned him to be careful to not drop the candle on the carpet because it could start a fire and the house could burn down. Several minutes later he came down the stairs struggling to hold the candle in one hand, and with his other arm he was carrying his scriptures. His mother asked him why he was bringing his scriptures. His answer to her was “Mom, if the house burns down, I must save my scriptures!” We knew that our efforts to help him to love the scriptures had been planted in his heart forever.

Regarding our responsibility to our employers, President Hinckley said: “You have an obligation. Be honest with your employer. Do not do



Church work on his time.”⁷

He also reminded us that our employment enables us to take care of our family as well as allowing us to be effective servants in the Church.

Priesthood holders have many responsibilities and assignments. We have opportunities to visit, interview, teach, and serve people. It is our sacred responsibility to edify Church members and to help strengthen their faith and testimony of our Savior Jesus Christ. We have opportunities to take care of the families whom we serve as home teachers and to teach members to provide for themselves, their families, and the poor and needy in the Lord’s way. Priesthood holders have the responsibility to motivate the youth to prepare to serve honorable full-time missions and to be married in the temple.⁸

President Ezra Taft Benson taught, “Priesthood holders need to provide watchcare over quorum members and

their families through organized home teaching.”⁹

We need to be concerned about each member of the Church for whom we have responsibility. Home teaching is one of our great responsibilities.

As fathers, we also have the sacred responsibility to set a worthy example for our children to help them to become better parents and leaders in their own homes. Quoting Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve: “May we ask all priesthood leaders, especially you fathers, to help prepare your sons. Prepare them both spiritually and temporally, to look and to act as servants of the Lord.”¹⁰

When we receive the priesthood, we make an eternal covenant to serve others.¹¹ As priesthood holders, we can be a powerful influence in the lives of others.

President Thomas S. Monson reminded us: “How fortunate and

blessed we are to be holders of the priesthood of God. . . .

“ . . . Always remember that people are looking to you for leadership and you are influencing the lives of individuals either for good or for bad, which influence will be felt for generations to come.”¹²

Our example will always speak loudly. During my years as a Church member, I have been influenced by the examples of many leaders and Church members. I remember a wonderful couple who were great examples to our family and to the entire ward. They were baptized in 1982. I was their bishop.

Celso and Irene lived quite far from the chapel. They walked 40 minutes each way to the church, and they never missed a meeting. They were always present with big smiles on their faces. It was their disposition to serve others. Celso and Irene have a son, Marcos, who was born mentally



and physically handicapped. I remember well how they took such loving care of their son. In 1999 Celso had a cerebral brain hemorrhage that left his lower body paralyzed. Celso continued to come to church faithfully with his family. They were faithful in the payment of their tithing and paid generous fast offerings. Our son Moroni is now their bishop, and he shared with me that Celso and Irene continue to serve faithfully. Not only do they serve in their ward callings; they also serve faithfully as ordinance workers in the São Paulo Brazil Temple. They serve every Friday from early morning until night. They always contribute so willingly of their time and resources in faithfully fulfilling their Church responsibilities.

President Monson counseled:

“Most service given by priesthood holders is accomplished quietly, without fanfare. A friendly smile, a warm handclasp, a sincere testimony of truth can literally lift lives, change human nature, and save precious souls.”¹³

That is the kind of quiet service rendered by Celso and Irene.

As we consider the wise use of our time and resources to meet the needs of our families, our employment, and our Church callings, it is important to remember that every priesthood holder needs to grow spiritually. This is a responsibility we have to ourselves. And it is important to remember that we all have helpers.¹⁴ The counsel from our prophets, seers, and revelators is the most precious help that we receive.

Our Savior extended this invitation to each and every one of us individually:

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”¹⁵

When we do His work and His will, rather than our own will, we will realize that the yoke is easy and the burden is light. He will be with us always. He will reveal to us the exact portion that we need for success with our families, our career, and every responsibility that we have in His Church. He will help us to grow individually and as brethren in the priesthood.

I know that the Church is true. I know that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God. I know that Thomas S. Monson is the living prophet on the earth today. I know that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See “Behold! A Royal Army,” *Hymns*, no. 251.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Rejoicing in the Privilege to Serve,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 21, 2003, 22.
3. *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 21, 2003, 22.
4. *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 21, 2003, 22.
5. *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 21, 2003, 23.
6. Russell M. Nelson, “Our Sacred Duty to Honor Women,” *Liabona*, July 1999, 47; *Ensign*, May 1999, 40.
7. *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 21, 2003, 23.
8. First Presidency letter, Sept. 25, 1996, “Leadership Training Emphasis.”
9. Ezra Taft Benson, “Strengthen Thy Stakes,” *Tambuli*, Aug. 1991, 6; *Ensign*, Jan. 1991, 5.
10. M. Russell Ballard, “Prepare to Serve,” *Ensign*, May 1985, 43.
11. See M. Russell Ballard, “The Greater Priesthood: Giving a Lifetime of Service in the Kingdom,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1992, 72.
12. Thomas S. Monson, “Examples of Righteousness,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2008, 65–66; see also N. Eldon Tanner, “For They Loved the Praise of Men More Than the Praise of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, 74.
13. Thomas S. Monson, “To Learn, to Do, to Be,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 62.
14. See *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 21, 2003, 23.
15. Matthew 11:29–30.