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Many Ways to Minister

When we minister as the Lord ministered, the possibilities for showing Christlike love are limitless.

We may not always think of sharing the gospel as a form of ministering, but my wife does. She often tries to find people who are prepared to receive the gospel simply by smiling at them.

Ministering by Smiling

For example, some time ago we were at an airport. While I was taking care of the luggage, she, with a beautiful smile on her face, was observing the passengers around her. She noticed a man who saw her smiling, so she smiled even more. As expected, he smiled back, and that allowed her to start a conversation.

When I had retrieved our luggage, she called me over and introduced me to him. Soon the conversation turned to the gospel. It turned out he had a friend who had just left to serve a mission. He agreed to receive the missionaries, and in a few weeks, he joined the Church.

I call this “Ministering through the Power of a Smile.”

Ministering While in Line

Another time, my wife was waiting in line at a government agency where we were taking care of some documents. As she was completing the required forms, she noticed that a person behind her was watching what she was writing. My wife said hello and, again, began a conversation that soon turned to the gospel. After a few minutes, she asked if he was interested in speaking with the missionaries. He agreed! Not long after that, he accepted the invitation to be baptized. On the Sunday after his baptism, we attended his ward’s sacrament meeting, and I had the blessing of confirming him a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I call this “Ministering While Waiting in Lines.”

Sharing the Gospel Is Ministering

Whether it is by using a smile to start a conversation, visiting with someone as we stand in line, or some other way, every day we meet people who need the peace that only the gospel

of Jesus Christ can bring. As we overcome the fear of rejection by replacing it with love for our fellowmen, we will be prepared when opportunities to share the gospel arise. You may not have previously thought of this as ministering, but it is one of many opportunities we have to show Christlike love. And showing that love is true ministering.

We must remember that the power of conversion comes through the Holy Ghost. We are not the ones who convert people; we invite them to come unto Christ. The Holy Ghost testifies of the truth and confirms in their hearts that the gospel is true.

The heavens rejoice for a person who repents and accepts the gospel:

“Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God. . . .

“And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!” (Doctrine and Covenants 18:10, 13).

In addition to the joy that Heavenly Father feels, He promises that we will also be partakers of that joy:

“And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

“And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!” (Doctrine and Covenants 18:15–16).

Ministering as the Lord Ministered

In the April 2018 general conference, President Russell M.



Nelson made an announcement that penetrated many hearts: “We have made the decision to retire home teaching and visiting teaching as we have known them. Instead, we will implement a newer, holier approach to caring for and ministering to others. We will refer to these efforts simply as ‘ministering.’”¹

Although we will be assigned people to minister to, it’s important to remember that the Lord wants us to learn to minister to all of His children: to those in our families, our workplaces, our schools, our communities—and even to those we meet in airports or lines where we fill out paperwork. Wherever there is a child of God in need, we should be there also. Ministering is part of discipleship. We can’t become like Christ unless we live the two great commandments He taught us:

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

“And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30–31).

Ministering to All

Ministering to those we are assigned to watch over is good. However, ministering to all who need our help is what identifies us as true Christians. The Lord is no respecter of persons, and we must follow His example. He didn’t serve only those who were His followers. He often focused on needs without regard to religious affiliation, ethnic background, or nationality. He helped friends, foes, and strangers alike. He knew, as we should remember, that we are all children of the same Heavenly Father.

The Savior said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). By developing love for all of our brothers and sisters, we increase our capacity to serve them. And as we serve them, our love for them increases. It’s like a circle that links love with service—the more we love, the more we serve; the more we serve, the more we love.

Spiritual Ministering

“When true ministers do the Lord’s will, they represent the Lord in their official duties and act as His agents



[Doctrine and Covenants 64:29], thus conducting the work necessary for the salvation of mankind.”²

When ministering to others, we need to remember that God’s children have both physical and spiritual needs, needs that must be met to enable them to progress toward salvation. As we help to meet the temporal needs of our fellow brothers and sisters, we can also bring joy and comfort to them when we minister to them spiritually as well.

Ministering on Both Sides of the Veil

There are also those we can no longer see and with whom we can no longer speak, who have passed from mortal life without receiving the ordinances and covenants essential to their salvation. We cannot as readily discern their needs because they are no longer physically among us. They are still our family. They love us and we love them. Those who have been taught the gospel in the spirit world, and who have accepted it, are eager to receive the saving ordinances but cannot do so on their own. They are aware of our actions, waiting for us to take their names to the temple so they can fully enjoy the blessings that gospel ordinances and covenants will bring into their lives.



I testify that as we commit ourselves to finding the elect on this side of the veil and to finding our ancestors who are on the other side of the veil, making sure that the ordinances are done for them in the Lord’s temples, our hearts will turn to them. Our joy will increase and our understanding of the marvelous plan of happiness will begin to unfold in our hearts and minds.

Ministering by Gathering Israel

Though President Nelson was speaking to the youth of the Church when he said the following, his words can apply to all Latter-day Saints:

“These surely *are* the latter days, and the Lord is hastening His work to gather Israel. That gathering is the most important thing taking place on earth today. Nothing else compares in magnitude, nothing else compares in importance, nothing else compares in majesty. And if you choose to, if you want to, you can be . . . part of something big, something grand, something majestic!

“When we speak of the *gathering*, we are simply saying this fundamental truth: every one of our Heavenly Father’s children, on both sides of the veil, deserves to hear the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. . . .

“. . . Would you like to be a big part of *the greatest* challenge, *the greatest* cause, and *the greatest* work on earth today?

“Would you like to help gather Israel during these precious latter days?”³

A Reminder to Minister

What a blessing it is to have a prophet in our day who reminds us not only of our responsibilities to minister but also of our opportunities to grow and progress. I testify that President Russell M. Nelson was called of God. I hope we will all follow President Nelson as he invites us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves (see Mark 12:30–31). ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Ministering,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 100.
2. Guide to the Scriptures, “Minister,” scriptures.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
3. Russell M. Nelson and Wendy W. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.