

I HAD PLENTY TO SHARE

I had always thought of emergency preparedness in terms of taking care of my family and myself. But I learned to view preparation differently one Sunday morning in southern Florida in 1992. Hurricane Andrew, one of the most destructive and costly hurricanes to hit the United States, disrupted a beautiful summer in Miami, Florida.

I was temporarily living alone in a beach apartment, attending a three-month orientation program for my job. When the hurricane warning came and I learned we would need to evacuate our apartment complex by noon, an associate reserved hotel rooms in an inland region for our co-workers and me. I boarded my windows and stored my personal belongings.

In anticipation of a weeklong visit from my wife and children, I had

previously purchased enough food and water for my family of six. I was comforted knowing I had a safe place to go and enough food to take with me to last several weeks.

As I prepared to leave at 10:30 a.m., I felt good—all was in order. I knelt in prayer, thanking Heavenly Father for my blessings and asking for His help during the coming storm. As I ended my prayer, the Spirit prompted me to say, “If there is anyone in need of help, please help me find him or her.”

Within a few minutes, a widow in her 80s knocked at my door. “I’m sorry,” she said. “I have the wrong room. I’m looking for a friend.”

She looked frazzled. When I asked if I could help, she became distraught and said she didn’t know what to do or where to go. I asked her where she

lived, and together we walked to her apartment, assessed her situation, and went over her options.

I told her that my company might have space in one of our hotel rooms, and I invited her to stay with our group. She sighed in relief. We quickly packed and secured her apartment and belongings, and I arranged for an associate to drive her car to the hotel.

As I prepared to leave, two more widows asked for assistance. I helped them calm down so they could think clearly and figure out where to find refuge. When I picked up luggage from one of my work associates, another elderly widow asked for help. We placed her fragile items in safe areas and helped her prepare to leave.

In the meantime, other co-workers invited two college students who had been living on an island to stay with our group at the inland hotel. The only food they had was a handful of snacks and a quart (.95 L) of mineral water. Fortunately, I had plenty to share, not only with them but with everyone else as well.

What a blessing it was to be prepared and guided by the Lord. This allowed me to provide a calming influence during a time of alarm and to spend almost all my time helping others without worrying about myself. I gained a new level of appreciation for the counsel from our priesthood leaders to be prepared. ■

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