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Follow THE PROPHET

Several years ago, just before general conference, President Thomas S. Monson taught a wonderful lesson. This time it was to assembled General Authorities who had traveled to Salt Lake City, Utah, many coming from places around the world where they were serving in Area Presidencies. We had come together to be instructed by the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles.

As the time for the meeting approached, everyone seemed to be in attendance except President Monson. Several minutes before the meeting was to begin, we stopped visiting with each other and sat reverently listening to the prelude music, expecting the prophet to arrive any moment.

We patiently waited as 9:00 a.m. came and then passed. Someone walked out the side door—obviously to see if some assistance might be needed. Upon returning, he said, “President Monson will join you shortly.”

About 15 minutes later, President Monson entered the room. Out of respect, we stood as he entered. We were happy to see him and pleased that he looked well. There was no obvious reason as to why he would have been late.

President Monson went straight to the pulpit and said, “Brethren, I’m sorry to be late, but my wife needed me this morning.”

I was deeply impressed and humbled, and I couldn’t stop thinking about his words.

This was a very important meeting. The entire senior leadership of the Church was assembled, but President Monson set the example for us all. His wife needed him,

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and he took the time necessary to care for her. It was a great sermon. I don’t remember anything else said that day, but I remember that sermon: “My wife needed me.”

Following the Prophet’s Example

I would like to suggest five ways we can follow the example of President Monson.

1. We can be positive, and we can be happy.

In the Pearl of Great Price, the Prophet Joseph Smith describes his “cheery temperament” (Joseph Smith—History 1:28). “Cheery” also describes President Monson.

On one occasion President Monson said: “We . . . can choose to have a positive attitude. We can’t direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails. In other words, we can choose to be happy and positive, regardless of what comes our way.”¹

One day I was waiting outside the First Presidency boardroom. I had been invited there to take part in a meeting to discuss temple matters. I sat quietly outside the room, alone. I thought the First Presidency was already meeting



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and that I would be invited to join them in a few minutes.

As I sat there, I could hear someone walking down the hall whistling. I thought to myself, “Someone doesn’t understand proper protocol. You don’t go walking around whistling outside the office of the President of the Church.”

A moment later the whistler walked around the corner—it was President Monson. He was happy, and he was positive. He greeted me warmly and said, “I guess we’ll start the meeting in a couple of minutes.”

Even with the weight of the whole Church on his shoulders, he is an example of happiness and he always has a positive attitude. We should be that way.

2. We can be kind and loving toward children.

Jesus spoke often of children. His prophet, President Monson, speaks often of children as well. I’ve seen, particularly at temple dedications, how he loves children and, by his example, teaches us how to treat them. At every temple dedication he focuses on the children. He loves to include them in the cornerstone ceremony and always invites a few of them to put some mortar in the cornerstone to participate in the symbolic completion of the temple. He makes it fun for them. He makes it memorable for them. He always has a big smile for them. He encourages

and commends them. It is a wonderful thing to see.

His warm greetings occasionally include high fives, wiggling of his ears, and encouragement to serve missions and marry in the temple.

A few years ago President Monson was scheduled to dedicate the Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple on his birthday. As he arrived at the temple and approached the front door of the temple, a group of young people had assembled. They obviously knew it was President Monson’s birthday because they began to sing “Happy Birthday” to him. He stopped and faced them with a big smile on his face. He even started to wave his arms as if he were leading them in the singing. At the end they added the refrain “And many more.” He said to me, “That’s my favorite part.”

The children and the youth of the Church love him, and they have no doubt that he loves them too!

3. We can follow the promptings of the Spirit.

President Monson beautifully stated his devotion to the Lord and his commitment to following the promptings of the Spirit with these words: “The sweetest experience I know in life is to feel a prompting and act upon it and later find out that it was the fulfillment of someone’s prayer or someone’s need. And I always want the Lord to know that if He needs an errand run, Tom Monson will run that errand for Him.”²

That is a pattern that each of us should want to follow.

4. We can love the temple.

President Monson will go down in history as one of the great temple builders in the history of the Church. Since becoming President of the Church in February 2008, he has continued the great work of building temples. In the six years he has been the prophet, President Monson has announced plans to build 33 new temples.

President Monson has said, “May each of us live worthy lives, with clean hands and pure hearts, so that the temple may touch our lives and our families.”³

He has also given this wonderful promise: “As we love the temple, touch the temple, and attend the temple, our lives will reflect our faith. As we come to these holy houses of God, as we remember the covenants we make within,

we shall be able to bear every trial and overcome each temptation.”⁴

Let us follow the pattern that the prophet has set for us in loving the temple.

5. We can be kind, considerate, and loving.

President Monson is a wonderful example of loving others. His entire ministry has been filled with making visits to homes; placing his hands on heads and giving blessings; making unexpected phone calls to comfort and encourage; sending letters of encouragement, commendation, and appreciation; visiting hospitals and care centers; and finding time to go to funerals and viewings despite a very busy schedule.

Just as the Savior would do, Thomas Monson has gone about doing good (see Acts 10:38) and blessing and loving others; this has been the driving force in his life.

A remarkable example of President Monson’s kindness occurred in 2012. As the beautiful Brigham City Utah Temple was nearing completion, I met with the First Presidency to discuss plans for its dedication. With Brigham City being only one hour north of Salt Lake City, it would have been very easy for President Monson to travel there for the dedication.

Instead, President Monson said, “Brigham City is the hometown of President Boyd K. Packer, this great Apostle who has sat beside me for so many years in the Twelve. I want him to have the honor and blessing of dedicating the temple in his hometown. I will stay away, and I’ll assign President Packer to dedicate the Brigham City Temple. I want it to be his day.”

It was a wonderful day for President Packer and for Sister Packer, who also grew up in Brigham City. I was very touched by President Monson’s kind and magnanimous gesture to his fellow Apostle. We can all be that way. We can share and be kind and think more of those around us.

The Pattern of a Prophet

President Monson has taught us the way to live our lives with his wonderful and inspiring messages at general



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conference. He has taught us how to be followers of Jesus Christ by his remarkable and wonderful personal example. Truly the Lord has given us a pattern in all things, and one of the patterns we should seek to follow is that of our beloved prophet.

I testify that there is a God in heaven who knows us and loves us. He has given us a prophet—to guide us, to teach us, and to lead us in these latter days. I believe the Lord expects us to love the prophet, to sustain him, and to follow his example.

I count it a great blessing to live in the day when Thomas S. Monson is the Lord’s prophet. As we follow him and try to be more like him, we will inevitably succeed in being more faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. ■

From a Church Educational System devotional given at Brigham Young University—Idaho on May 5, 2013. For the full address, visit lds.org/broadcasts.

NOTES

1. “Messages of Inspiration from President Monson,” *Church News*, Sept. 2, 2012, 2.
2. *On the Lord’s Errand* (DVD, 2008).
3. Thomas S. Monson, “Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Oct. 2010, 19.
4. Thomas S. Monson, *Be Your Best Self* (1979), 56; emphasis added.