



**By President
Russell M. Nelson**

President of the
Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

Senior Missionary

MOMENTS

*One of the best ways for
senior couples to make
magnificent memories is
to serve a mission together.*

When our friends who are 60 or 70 years old forget something, we often jokingly refer to the lapse in memory as a “senior moment.” But I would like to discuss a different kind of senior moment—a moment so magnificent that the memory of it will be everlasting. It is the moment when a senior missionary couple realizes that they are doing exactly what the Lord would have them do. At such memorable moments they recognize that:

- They have a lifetime of experience to share, and talents, skills, and gospel understanding they can use to bless others.
- Their example is a blessing to their children and their children’s children.
- As they serve, they are making enduring friendships.
- Their marriage is growing stronger every day.
- Service in His name is sweet.

Moments in the Making

My senior couple friends, such moments should be in the making for many of you. Consider the story told by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles about what a senior couple serving in Chile was able to do. The parent of one of the young elders died. The mission president was far enough away that he couldn’t get to the missionary quickly.

“But there was a sweet [mature] missionary couple serving in the area,” Elder Holland says. “They came and sat with that missionary and tenderly cared for and comforted him until the mission president could make personal contact. We had great young missionaries in our missions, but no young single missionary could have done for that elder what that couple was able to do.”¹

Their skill at that moment was simply to convey compassion in a time of need. They weren’t concerned about speaking any language other than the language of Christlike love. They weren’t worried about missing a grandchild’s birthday or a baby blessing, as important as those events may be. They were concerned about being where the Lord could use them to bless the life of one of His children. And because they were willing, He was able to let them represent Him.

Service Is Seldom Convenient

The truth is, no senior missionary finds it convenient to leave home. Neither did Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, or Wilford Woodruff. They had children and grandchildren too, and they loved their families just as we do. But they also loved the Lord and wanted to serve Him. Someday we may meet these stalwarts who helped to establish this dispensation. When we do, we will rejoice that we

did not seek the shadows when we should have served.

Some may prefer to serve while still living at home. After a stroke left Aase Schumacher Nelson (no relation) confined to a wheelchair, she feared her lifelong desire to go on a mission with her husband, Don, would not be fulfilled. Then a neighbor talked to them about his Church-service mission at a bishop's storehouse. Encouraged, they talked with a supervisor at the facility, completed their recommendation forms, and were called to serve for two days a week at a storehouse near their home.

"It's easy to just lay back and think, 'Oh, I'm not needed anymore,'" Aase Nelson says. "But now I feel that I *am* needed. And that's been a testimony to me."

You Are Definitely Needed

If you are tempted to think you're not needed, let me reassure you that you are. There is not a mission president in the Church who would not love to have additional couples serving in his mission. Seniors strengthen the younger elders and sisters. They provide support that helps others to serve better in their own responsibilities. And can you imagine what it means to a leader who has only been a member for a few years to have ready access to seasoned Church members? Senior couples are often a literal answer to the prayers of bishops and branch presidents.

We encourage mission presidents to seek out couples to meet needs in their missions. Bishops should seek out couples who could serve. LDS.org lists pages and pages of opportunities for senior couples. But most of all, couples might get on their knees and ask Heavenly Father if the



A couple in Seoul, South Korea, savors the sweetness of serving together.

time is right for them to serve a mission together. Of all the qualifications, a *desire* to serve may be the most important (see D&C 4:3).

As I extol the work of senior missionaries, I realize that there are many who would like to serve but are not able to do so. Limitations imposed by age or poor health deserve realistic appraisal, as do the important needs of family members. When desire burns within yet such limitations exist, others can be your arms and legs, and you can provide needed funds.

Senior couples, no matter who you are or where you are, please pray about this opportunity to create great senior missionary moments together. Heavenly Father will help you know what you can do. ■

NOTE

1. Jeffrey R. Holland in Joseph Walker, "Elder Jeffrey Holland: LDS Church Desperately Needs More Senior Missionaries," *Deseret News*, Sept. 14, 2011, 3.