



By Elder
Kenneth Johnson
Of the Seventy

Called AND Set Apart TO SERVE

Formal callings in the Church are not complete until we have been set apart by proper priesthood authority.

In a vision given to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon at Hiram, Ohio, on February 16, 1832, we find these words of comfort and encouragement:

“I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear¹ me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

“Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory” (D&C 76:5–6).

During my years as a member of the Church, I have experienced a growing appreciation for what it means to be called of God and for the promised blessings associated with responding to the Lord’s invitation to serve Him.

When leaders pray to know the will of the Lord before extending a call to serve, they receive a feeling of assurance that confirms the correct action to be taken. It is both essential

and gratifying to obtain a personal witness through prayer that we have been called of God. Through His servants, the Lord invites us to participate in His work so that we can come to know and love Him more fully (see Mosiah 5:13).

Upon receiving a call to serve, we might experience feelings of inadequacy comparable to what Enoch felt when he was commissioned by the Lord to lead and teach the people (see Moses 6:31). The words “My Spirit is upon you, wherefore all thy words will I justify” (Moses 6:34) must have brought assurance to Enoch as he gained a vision of how the Lord would empower him to fulfill his sacred assignment. The scriptures further record what a great leader Enoch became as “he walked with God” (Moses 6:39). The experience of Enoch contains valuable lessons for each of us as we serve in the Lord’s Church.

The principle of setting apart those called to serve is expressed in the counsel of the Lord to Moses when He instructed Moses to “lay thine hand upon [Joshua]. . . . And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him” (Numbers 27:18, 20).

Through this divinely established pattern, we can rise above our individual frailties, limitations, and even opposition. Consider the experience of Nephi and Lehi, the sons of Helaman: “The Holy Spirit of God did come down from heaven, and did enter into their hearts, and they were filled as if with fire, and they could speak forth marvelous words” (Helaman 5:45; see also verses 17–19).

Teaching by the Spirit

In a revelation to Joseph Smith, the Lord posed the following question: “Wherefore, I the Lord ask you this question—unto what were ye ordained?”² (D&C 50:13). The Lord responds, “To preach my gospel by the Spirit, even the Comforter which was sent forth to teach the truth” (D&C 50:14).

Clearly, there are constraints concerning the manner in which we should teach sacred truths:

“Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit” (D&C 63:64).

“He that is ordained of me and sent forth to preach the word of truth