

MY SERVICE-FILLED SUNDAYS

By Jeffery A. Hogge

My Sundays are full, but I feel grateful that I can serve without the hardships faced by early Church leaders like Elder Parley P. Pratt.

It's Sunday morning. Ahead of me I have a 12-hour schedule of meetings, interviews, confirmations, and ordinations. I will start in one stake center and end in another meetinghouse on the other side of town—all on a very hot day.

I look forward to each meeting, interview, confirmation, and ordination. But yesterday, as I thought about how busy I would be, I indulged in a dose of self-pity—until I opened the *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* and started reading where I had left off. Elder Pratt had been taken prisoner, along with Joseph and Hyrum Smith and others, during difficult days in Missouri. After being taken to Independence, the Brethren were confined to a hotel to sleep on the floor with a block of wood for a pillow.

One cold, snowy morning Elder Pratt arose and, unnoticed, slipped out of the hotel. He made his way eastward through town and into adjacent fields. After walking about a mile (1.6 km), Elder Pratt entered a forest, the falling snow covering his tracks and the trees hiding his presence.

He reflected on his predicament. To continue eastward

meant escape into another state, where he could send for his family. To return to the hotel meant incarceration and accusations of high crimes. Tempted to escape, Elder Pratt thought of the “storm of trouble, or even of death” he would cause the other prisoners if he left.

In his quandary, a scriptural thought struck him: “He that will seek to save his life shall lose it; but he that will lose his life for my sake shall find it again, even life eternal” (see Mark 8:35; D&C 98:13).

Elder Pratt returned to the hotel. Months of arduous incarceration

would follow—without family, fellowship of the Saints, or the ability to serve in his apostolic calling.¹

Closing the book, I pondered the deprivations of the early Saints—some of them my ancestors. Because of their testimony of the gospel and their faith in Jesus Christ, they endured cruelty and persecution. Because of their endurance, today I can serve and worship freely, bound to them in faith and testimony.

As I prepare for this Sabbath day, my family is safe, looking forward to a day of worship in a comfortable meetinghouse. The fellowship of the Saints will brighten our day. We will rejoice with them in confirmations and ordinations performed, responsibilities fulfilled, and faith fortified. We will partake of the sacrament, remembering our Savior and His atoning sacrifice. And tonight we will gather in our home to read the Book of Mormon and pray together before we lie down on comfortable beds and settle our heads onto soft pillows.

My Sundays are full. For that I am grateful and blessed. ■

The author lives in California, USA.

NOTE

1. See Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (1979), 194–97.

