

WOULD YOU PRAY WITH ME?

“I will be back in a few minutes,” my Thai host father said on his way out the front door. At least, I *think* that’s what he said. My comprehension of the Thai language was sketchy at best.

I had lived in Thailand for about four months as a community service volunteer, and although I could speak basic Thai, I still had a lot to learn. I had just changed areas, but my new host family already understood that I was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I did my best to explain my values and even gave the family a Thai Book of Mormon and a *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet.

As I waited for my host father to come home, I sat on the living room

floor and began studying a Thai phrase book. Suddenly, a strong impression came to me to invite him to pray with me. It had occurred to me before to ask him, but the impression had never come so powerfully. During my time in Thailand, I had shared the gospel on many occasions, but I had never asked anyone to pray with me.

My host father and I had a good relationship. I even called him “Dad,” which he seemed to appreciate. I felt excited and then nervous. What if he told me no? What if he felt uncomfortable around me for the rest of my time with his family? Should I chance ruining our relationship? To make matters worse, I didn’t know how to pray in Thai. I didn’t even know enough Thai

to ask my host father to pray, so I asked my Heavenly Father for help.

Shortly afterward, I heard a loud clang as the front gate closed. As my host father entered, he greeted me and announced that he was going to bed. I realized that I couldn’t let this opportunity pass. As I opened my mouth to speak, I immediately knew what to say and how to say it in Thai.

“Dad, in America I used to pray with my family, and I really miss doing so. Would you pray with me?” I was surprised by his response.

“Jon,” he replied, “of course I would. Teach me how.”

I then explained in Thai what prayer is but decided to say my prayer in English. I knew God was listening, and I knew my host father felt the Spirit. My eyes welled with tears as he followed the conclusion of my prayer with “amen.”

I can’t express in words the joy and love I felt for my host father and my Heavenly Father. That experience gave me confidence and led to more experiences in sharing the gospel with others. Unfortunately, my host family never accepted my invitation to attend the local branch, but I know that the knowledge I shared with them will benefit them sooner or later.

Though we may not always see the fruits of our labors in this life, I learned that planting gospel seeds can bless at least one life—your own. And in the Lord’s time, those seeds may bless the lives of others. ■

Jonathan H. Bowden, Utah, USA



What if he told me he didn’t want to pray? Should I chance ruining our relationship?

WOULD IÑAKI EVER COME HOME?

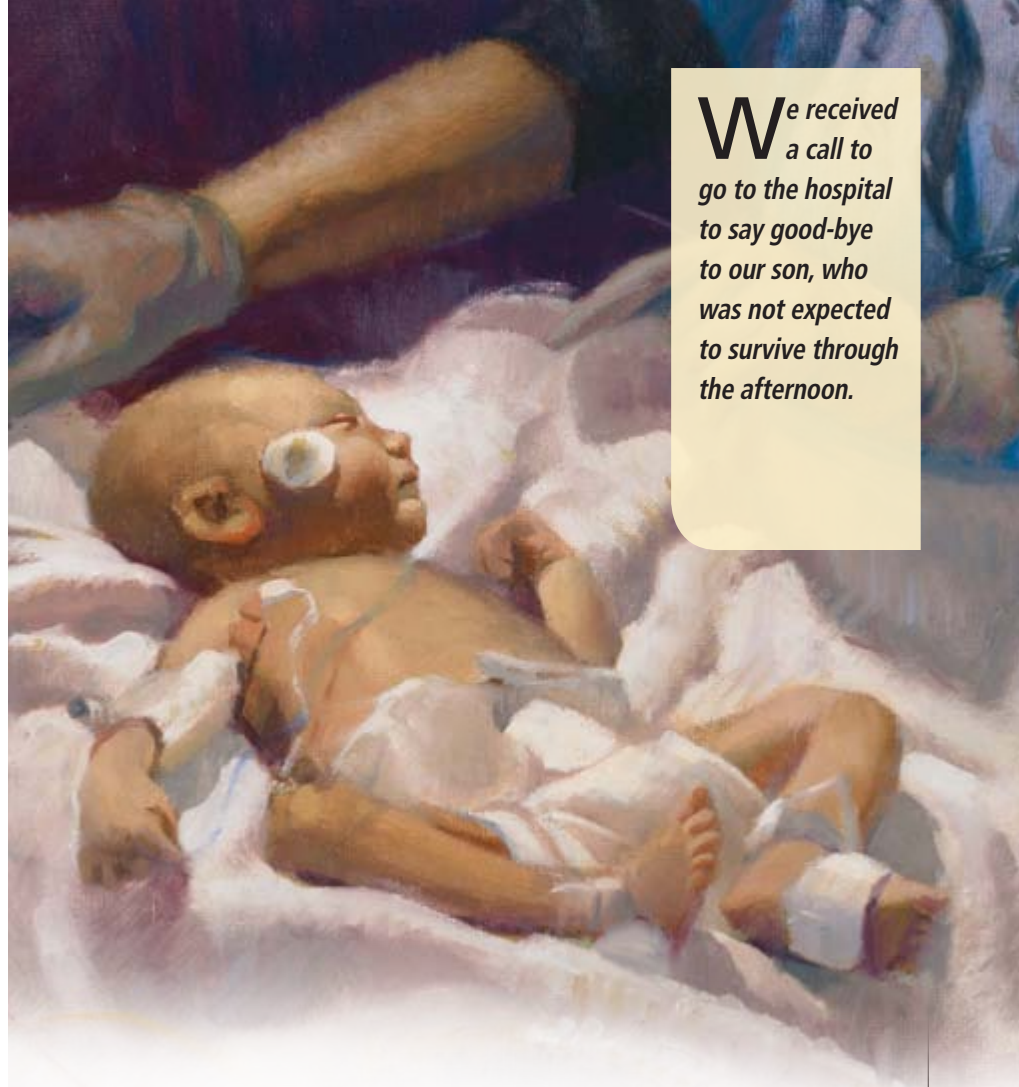
After only 23 weeks gestation, our third son, Iñaki, was born via emergency cesarean section. He weighed only 1 pound, 4 ounces (560 g) and measured 12.2 inches (31 cm).

Because our son was so premature, there was not much chance he would survive. Our doctor asked us if we really wanted physicians to help him, thus prolonging the inevitable. I answered that as long as he was alive, we had to give him a chance. Then I asked God for a miracle.

Iñaki received a blessing of health that first night. During the next four long months, he suffered a perforation in his intestines, a brain hemorrhage, and a collapsed lung. Because of his circumstances, we received permission to give him a name and a blessing in the hospital.

Throughout this process, we met other parents who suffered just as we did, and we offered each other support and comfort. We also shared our testimonies of the gospel with everyone we could.

One day we received a call to go to the hospital to say good-bye to our son, who was not expected to survive through the afternoon. When we arrived, we held him and spoke to him. Seeing him in his weak condition was indescribably painful. For the first time, my husband and I realized that we were just temporary guardians for



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this child of God. All we could do to help him was pray and ask Heavenly Father for His will to be done. Iñaki clung to life that afternoon, and we are grateful that he continued to do so in the days that followed.

During the four months Iñaki spent in the neonatal intensive-care unit, we repeatedly saw the power of the priesthood in action as Heavenly Father blessed our son through the hands of physicians and priesthood holders—eventually healing him, to the amazement of the doctors.

In October 2008, Iñaki came home. We have learned many things as

a family through this experience. We know that our Heavenly Father loves us and that He works miracles and preserves His Saints despite the trials we must endure. And we understand better the purpose of eternal families, the important role they play in the plan of happiness, and how generous our Heavenly Father is with His children.

Today we are a different family, more united and more aware of the suffering and needs of those around us—all because of our son and the miracle he has wrought in our lives. ■

Paulina del Pilar Zelada Muñoz,
Santiago, Chile

GOD WILL BLESS ME

I was serving in the mission office of the El Salvador San Salvador Mission when the mission president transferred me to an area that had been closed for many years. The leaders of the branch there had not only prayed and fasted that missionaries would return, but they had also prepared for that day.

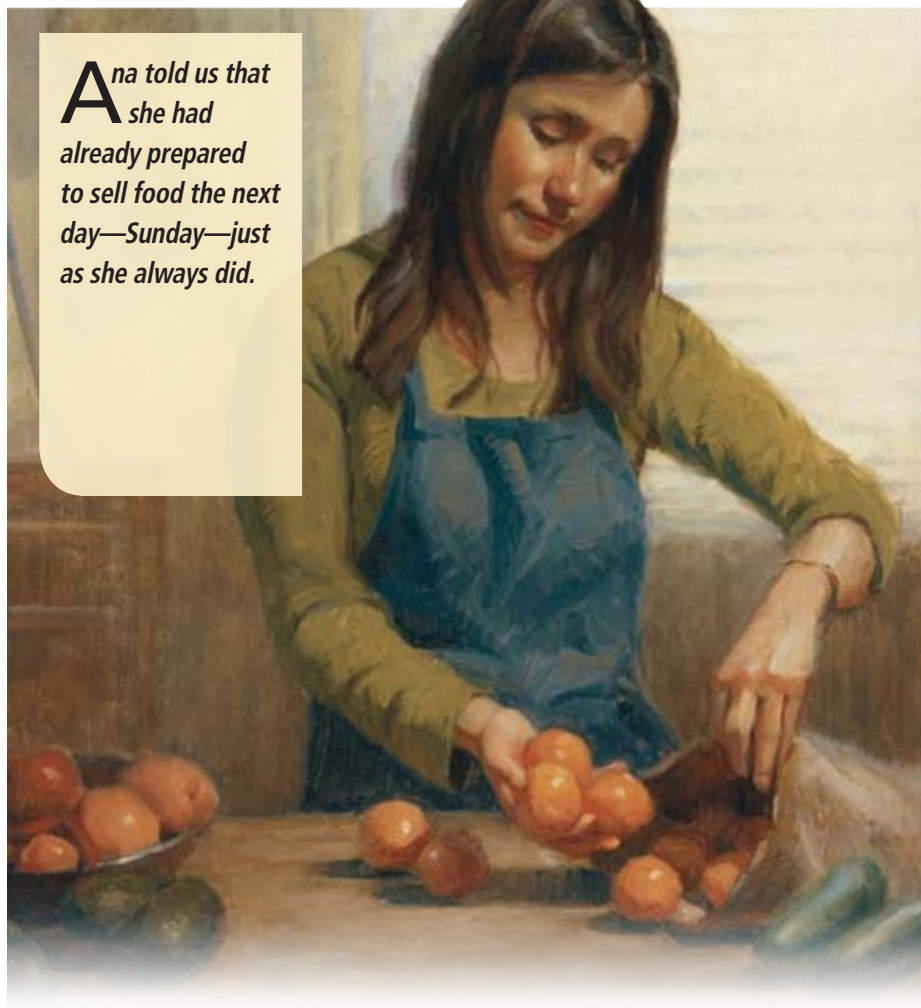
When I arrived, every family in the branch had friends who were ready to receive the missionaries. One member introduced us to a lady named Ana Oviedo, who sold fruit and homemade food on one of the busiest street corners in the city. While she was there selling food one Saturday morning, we asked if we could visit her at her home and share a message about Jesus Christ. She accepted.

When we arrived that night, Ana and her four children were waiting for us. We introduced ourselves and started teaching them. We felt inspired to teach about the blessings of keeping the Sabbath day holy. We also taught the family about tithing and the promises made by the prophet Malachi (see Malachi 3:10–12).

In response, Ana told us that she had already prepared to sell food the next day—Sunday—just as she always did. We then offered a prayer, asking Heavenly Father to bless this poor family, which needed the mother's income.

The following day we were surprised to see her come to church with

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her children. We welcomed them and asked her what had happened with the food she had prepared to sell.

“Elders, I spent last night pondering God’s promises,” she said. “He will bless me.” Then she added, “Elders, where do I pay my tithing?”

We were moved by her show of faith, and we prayed that the Lord would answer our prayers for this family.

The next evening we went by her house again. She was crying tears of gratitude because God had blessed her so greatly that day. She said she had been selling food on that corner her whole life—Monday through

Sunday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.—and that she always had leftover items that didn’t sell. But that Monday she had sold all of her food by 1:00 p.m.

Heavenly Father had answered our prayers. The Lord continued to bless Ana, and she no longer needed to sell food on the Sabbath. Her children were soon baptized, but Ana’s husband would not consent to her baptism. Nevertheless, she remained faithful to the gospel and attended church until the day she died.

I know Heavenly Father keeps His promises when we obey His commandments with all our heart. ■

Julio Cesar Merlos, Texas, USA

JIM NEEDED MY HELP

Shortly after our marriage in the Salt Lake Temple, Jim and I found ourselves living in a rented cottage on the Oregon coast. Jim was a topographic engineer for the government, in charge of checking and correcting a map of the Oregon coastline. Each morning he would leave with another engineer to continue the work of the previous day. His work was difficult because the coast was heavily forested.

One evening as I was about to start dinner, a strong impression came into

my mind that my dinner preparations were not important. Jim would not be home for dinner that night. Another thought followed: Jim was in trouble and needed my help!

I did not hear a voice, but the message came as clearly into my mind as if it had been spoken. I had to help him, but where was he? He worked each day along the coast, but I had no idea where he was working that day. I felt impelled to get in the car and drive to the main highway, but in which

direction should I turn? With only slight hesitation, I felt that I should turn south. I then passed many side roads, any one of which could have been the area of Jim's work.

I was impressed to leave the highway and follow one of the single-lane roads. It was raining, and after a mile or two the road became a muddy trail. I decided I had better turn around and head back. It was getting dark, and I thought, "It was silly of me to have come."

But no sooner had I turned onto the highway than I came upon two tired, despondent engineers, so covered with mud that no one else would have wanted to pick them up. Jim and his co-worker told me that their truck had become stuck in a mud hole. They had tried to free it but finally left it and hiked through dense undergrowth back to the main highway.

"How did you know where we were?" they wondered, relieved that I had found them. My relief was equal to theirs as I explained how I had been guided by the Spirit.

As Jim and I knelt in prayer that evening, we gave thanks for the influence of the Holy Ghost, which had come to me in answer to my husband's prayers for help. ■

Jean Partridge, Utah, USA

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