

Helping Others Prepare for Unexpected Needs

As ministering brothers and sisters, we can help our brothers and sisters prepare for an uncertain world.

Pandemics, natural disasters, economic downturns, political upheaval, and violent conflicts—the world has seen plenty of these in the past year. In addition to these large-scale events, we also face unexpected challenges in our personal lives, such as illness, divorce, loss of income, and so forth.

Our efforts to prepare for the unexpected can provide safety and security for ourselves and others. What can we do as ministering brothers and sisters to help those we love weather the unexpected storms in their lives?

Carlomagno Aguilar from Angeles, Philippines, provides just one example. When he learned that his area would be going into quarantine because of the COVID-19 pandemic, he hurried to buy supplies—although his list was different from those around him. He had a plan to be prepared, buying seeds and fertilizer for his home garden.

To be more self-reliant, Carlomagno has been an urban farmer for years. He also ministers

to his neighbors, both by giving them produce from his garden and by teaching them to grow their own food. He also created an online channel where his tips and tutorials are available to everyone, helping his brothers and sisters become more self-reliant and prepared for the future.

Bishop W. Christopher Waddell, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, taught: “As we embrace spiritual principles and seek inspiration from the Lord, we will be guided to know the Lord’s will for us, individually and as families, and how best to apply the important principles of temporal preparedness. The most important step of all is to begin” (“There Was Bread,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2020, 44–45).

Helping each other be prepared in such an uncertain world is a basic way to show Christlike love. Let’s help each other take that “most important step” to begin.

Suggestions for Helping Others

As always, ministering begins with prayerful consideration and counseling together. The following suggestions can help you think through how you or those you minister to could begin preparing to meet unexpected challenges.

1. **Think holistically.** We can prepare in a variety of ways for different areas of our lives. It’s important to store and produce food as you are able, prepare financially, develop strong emotional resiliency, and make plans for emergency situations.
2. **Discuss challenges that are most likely to occur where you live and how to address them.** Different areas around the world have unique challenges. If you live somewhere where earthquakes are common, discuss how you can prepare your home to help you stay safe, such as securing heavy furniture to the wall. Or if you live somewhere where typhoons are common, discuss how to respond in that situation, such as keeping a radio on for news or evacuating to high ground.



Carlomagno Aguilar started an online channel to teach about urban farming.



3. **Discuss how to create an emergency fund.** Saving money can help you if you lose your job or have additional unexpected expenses. Talk about how to save money, such as by starting small and saving a little each time you are paid until you reach your goal.
4. **Gather supplies for an emergency kit together.** Having an emergency kit can help you be prepared if you need to leave your home for a brief period. Work together to think through and gather needed items. This can be done over a period of time. Consider shelter, light, money, food and water, medical supplies, communication, critical documents, a change of clothing, entertainment and comfort items (games, books, toys for children), and any other needs.

5. **Build a friendship with the person you serve.** It's important to have strong coping skills for managing the emotions that come with difficulty. One of these skills is to have healthy relationships. As you strengthen your friendship with the person, you will be helping them to create a support system.
6. **Talk about food storage.** It can be helpful to have extra food on hand for emergencies. Encourage each other to start by building a short-term supply that you use and replenish in your regular cooking. Then start working on gathering long-term staples. If you don't have much space for food storage or if you're prohibited by law from storing large amounts of food, just store as much as is appropriate for your circumstances. ■

HELPFUL RESOURCES

You can learn more about these tips and additional ways to help others become more self-reliant by visiting ChurchofJesusChrist.org/self-reliance. Click on "Manuals and Videos" to see the different self-reliance courses.