

# Fulfilling Family Responsibilities

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The mission of the Lord's Church is to help all people come unto Christ. Families can help accomplish this mission as they:

1. Provide for their own spiritual and physical needs and help meet the needs of others.
2. Share the gospel with others.
3. See that family members receive temple ordinances and help provide these blessings for their ancestors who have died.

## Spiritual and Physical Needs

### Spiritual Needs

The previous section of this guidebook, "Teaching the Gospel in the

Home," contains information on how families can provide for their spiritual needs.

### Physical Needs

Families are to become self-reliant so they can provide for their own physical needs and help others. To become self-reliant, family members must be willing to work. Work is physical, mental, or spiritual effort. It is a source of accomplishment, happiness, self-esteem, and prosperity. Parents should strive to be self-reliant and should teach their children likewise. Being self-reliant will enable them to help those in need.

Fathers are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for

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their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. Parents see that the family has a clean home, wholesome food, clothing, medical and dental care, educational opportunities, instruction in managing financial resources, and, if possible, training in how to grow some of their own food. Parents should teach their children how to prepare their food and how to preserve it for later use.

Parents should be willing to work hard to provide for these physical needs. "And ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked" (Mosiah 4:14). Parents should plan and prepare to provide for family needs in times of illness, disaster, unemployment, or other difficulties. If the father has trouble providing for the physical needs of his family and if other family members are unable to help, he may seek assistance through priesthood leaders.

Children can help provide for the physical needs of their families by helping their parents with their work, studying well in school, taking care of their clothing and other possessions, keeping themselves and their home clean and neat, and maintaining good health.

Family members should improve their ability to read, write, and do basic arithmetic and should take advantage of every opportunity to obtain knowledge and improve skills. They should

obey the Word of Wisdom and eat healthful foods. Where possible, families should store a year's supply, or as much as possible, of the basic items needed to sustain life. Family members should avoid unnecessary debt, save for the future, meet all of their obligations, and use their resources wisely, avoiding waste.

Parents should teach their children to share with others. Nearly everyone can give something, no matter how little they have. One way to help those in need is by fasting each month and contributing fast offerings, which are used to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, and relieve the afflicted. We show our love for the Lord when we help others. He said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

## Sharing the Gospel

The Lord, through His latter-day prophets, has taught that every



member of the Church has the responsibility to share the gospel with others. "It becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor" (D&C 88:81). Alma, a prophet in the Book of Mormon, explained that when we are baptized we should be willing "to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places" (Mosiah 18:9).

Family members should do all they can to help their relatives, friends, and neighbors learn about the gospel of Jesus Christ and the blessings it can bring into their lives. By sharing the gospel, parents and children can strengthen their own testimonies and bring the blessings of the gospel to others. Families can:

- Be good examples by obeying all the commandments (see Matthew 5:16).
- Be grateful for their membership in the Church (see Romans 1:16) and let other people know they are members.
- Ask acquaintances if they would like to know more about the Church.
- Ask the Lord to help them select a family or individual who is ready to hear the gospel.
- Introduce the family or individual to the Church in some way, such as by inviting them to a family home evening or to a Church meeting or activity, giving them Church books or pamphlets to read, or talking

with them about the blessings of the gospel.

- Invite the family or individual into their home to be taught by the missionaries.

Parents have the responsibility to prepare themselves and their children to serve full-time missions. To prepare children, especially sons, parents should teach the gospel in the home, have personal and family scripture study and prayers, and talk often about the responsibilities and blessings of sharing the gospel. They can teach their children to save money for missions, work hard, be self-reliant, and love and serve other people.

## Temple Ordinances for the Living and the Dead



In temples, worthy Church members receive sacred ordinances and enter into covenants with God. They also participate in ordinance work for their deceased ancestors. Where possible, the father and mother should each

obtain a temple recommend from their priesthood leaders and go to a temple to receive their own temple ordinances. If they are unable to go to a temple, they should live worthily of a temple recommend.

Families have the sacred responsibility to ensure that temple ordinances are performed for their ancestors who have died without receiving them. Church members who have received their own ordinances should return to the temple as often as time, means, and temple availability permit to perform ordinances for their ancestors.

Fathers and mothers should gather written records of important events in their lives and in the lives of their

children, including certificates of blessings, baptisms, ordinations, marriages, and deaths; important letters; photographs; news clippings; and similar items. They should compile their own personal histories and should encourage each family member to keep a personal history. They should help younger children begin their own personal histories.

Families should gather information about their ancestors and compile it into family histories. They should begin by compiling information on their most recent four generations.

## Leadership Training

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Under the direction of stake, mission, or district leaders, priesthood and auxiliary leaders are to teach parents to understand and perform the three basic family responsibilities (see pages 12–15). Leaders should teach fathers and mothers how to lead their families. If a family lives in an isolated area, the stake, mission, or district leaders are to see that parents learn and fulfill their responsibilities.