

# Service *and* *the* Sabbath



From an interview with Elder William W. Parmley of the Seventy, currently serving in the Africa Southeast Area Presidency; by Kimberly Webb

*Choose ye this day, to serve the Lord God who made you* (Moses 6:33).

**W**hen my wife was a little girl, she often prayed for the mother of the man she would someday marry.

She prayed that his mother would teach him the gospel and prepare him to be a righteous husband. I think her prayers were answered! My mother was a great influence in my life. For 25 years, she was the editor of the *Children's Friend*, as it was called in those days. I used to watch her edit the articles. Sometimes I went with her to the Primary offices and sat in a corner, reading a book, while she held a meeting. As I watched her serve, I came to understand that the Church is true. She worked harder for no pay than most people work to earn a living. Her testimony showed through her actions and efforts.

My father was pretty extraordinary, too. He was a professor of physics at the University of Utah, and the

greatest thing he taught me is that science and religion aren't opposites, as some people seem to think. They are merely different ways of looking at things. Because of



his example, I studied physics when I went to college.

I attended Harvard University, a very challenging school. Having gotten straight As all my life, I expected to do well. I was shocked when my first paper came back with a D on it! I found out that most students there had attended preparatory schools. I had attended a regular high school and was about two years behind them in preparation.

The pressure to study on Sunday was enormous. Almost everyone else did. Finally, a group of us Church members decided that we would keep the Sabbath day holy and not study on Sundays. I can still remember how strongly we felt the Spirit on those days. We charged our spiritual batteries, and it carried us through the week. As a result, my grades went up, and I graduated with the highest honors in physics.

For most people in our culture, the Sabbath is a holiday, not a holy day. Instead of attending church, they visit the “church of the cabin,” “the church of the boat,” or perhaps “the church of football.” The Sabbath can be a special day for all of us if we use it appropriately.

One of the things we should do on Sundays is study the scriptures. They can guide us and influence our decisions. For me, Mosiah 2:17 had a great impact: “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.” Reading this scripture helped me decide to go to medical school and become a doctor. Serving is a very special thing to do because it builds bonds of friendship and love.

The Lord calls us to serve Him in different ways. I have had wonderful and amazing experiences demonstrating that callings *do* come from the Lord. Sometimes I have known in advance, by the Spirit, what callings I would receive. I have helped organize new stakes, and every time, the Lord makes it clear who the new stake president should be. Whatever callings you may receive in your life, plan now to accept them. Callings truly come from the Lord. You’ll have wonderful experiences serving Him and those around you. ●

**Top: Elder Parmley with his wife, Shanna**  
**Center: With his wife and their family on their daughter Ann’s wedding day**  
**Bottom: Being held by his sons during a family Father’s Day celebration**

