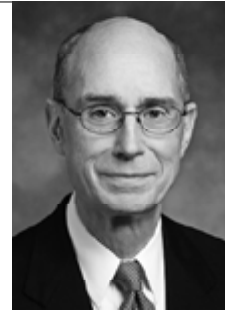


By President
Henry B. Eyring

First Counselor in
the First Presidency



Exhort Them to Pray

When I was a little child, my parents taught me by example to pray. I began with a picture in my mind of Heavenly Father being far away. As I have matured, my experience with prayer has changed. The picture in my mind has become one of a Heavenly Father who is close by, who is bathed in a bright light, and who knows me perfectly.

That change came as I gained a sure testimony that Joseph Smith's report of his experience in 1820 in Manchester, New York, is true:

"I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17).

Heavenly Father was in the grove on that beautiful spring day. He called Joseph by name. And He introduced the resurrected Savior of the world as His "Beloved Son." Whenever and wherever you pray, your

testimony of the reality of that glorious experience can bless you.

The Father to whom we pray is the glorious God who created worlds through His Beloved Son. He hears our prayers as He heard Joseph's prayer—as clearly as if they were being offered in His presence. He loves us enough that He gave His Son as our Savior. By that gift He made it possible for us to gain immortality and eternal life. And He offers us, through prayer in the name of His Son, the opportunity to commune with Him in this life as often as we choose.

Priesthood holders in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have the sacred trust to "visit the house of each member, and *exhort them to pray vocally and in secret*" (D&C 20:47; emphasis added).

There are many ways to exhort someone to pray. For example, we can testify that God has commanded us to pray always, or we can describe examples from scripture and from our own experience of the blessings that come from prayers of gratitude, supplication, and inquiry. For instance, I can testify that I know that Heavenly Father answers prayers. I have received direction and comfort from words that have come into my mind, and I know by the Spirit that the words were from God.

The Prophet Joseph Smith had such experiences, and so can you. He received this answer to heartfelt prayer:

“My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high” (D&C 121:7–8).

That was revelation from a loving Father to a faithful son in great distress. Every child of God can commune in prayer with Him. No exhortation to pray has had as great an effect on me as have the feelings of love and light that come with answers to humble prayers.

We gain a testimony of any commandment of God by keeping that commandment (see John 7:17). This is true of the command that we pray always vocally and in secret. As your teacher and your friend, I promise that God will answer your prayers and that by the power of the Holy Ghost, you can know for yourself that the answers are from Him.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

- “Pictures are valuable tools for strengthening the main idea of a lesson” (*Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 176). Show a painting of Joseph Smith or the First Vision. Discuss the experience Joseph Smith had with prayer. How would your prayers be more meaningful if you pictured “Heavenly Father . . . close by,” as does President Eyring?
- As President Eyring suggests, consider sharing your

testimony about prayer, describing blessings you have received because of prayer, or sharing scriptures about prayer.

YOUTH

My Prayer of Faith

By Priscilla Farias de Lima

When I was 18, I worked in a furniture store as a salesperson. My work schedule was very difficult. I worked from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. I was sad because I wasn’t able to participate in institute and Church activities.

I began to pray to Heavenly Father with a lot of faith to ask Him to help me find a job where I didn’t have to work on Saturdays so I could go to institute and other activities.

One day at work I was helping a man. We began talking, and he said he worked in a large bank. I asked how I could compete for a job opening in this business. He gave me his name and telephone number and told me I could call the recruiter and say I knew him. I went to the bank and did the necessary exams. I passed and began working six hours a day from Monday to Friday, earning three times what I was earning before.

I know the Lord guides us when we desire to place Him first. He is guiding me yet today. I know the principle of prayer is true.



Faith, Family, Relief

Guardians of the Hearth

Study this material and, as appropriate, discuss it with the sisters you visit. Use the questions to help you strengthen your sisters and to make Relief Society an active part of your own life.

You are the guardians of the hearth,” said President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) as he introduced “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” in the general Relief Society meeting in 1995. “You are the bearers of the children. You are they who nurture them and establish within them the habits of their lives. No other work reaches so close to divinity as does the nurturing of the sons and daughters of God.”¹

For almost 17 years now this proclamation has reinforced that our most significant responsibilities are centered in strengthening families and homes—no matter our current circumstances. Barbara Thompson, now second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, was in the Salt Lake Tabernacle when President Hinckley first read the proclamation. “That was a great occasion,” she remembers. “I felt the significance of the message. I also found myself thinking, ‘This is a great guide for parents. It is also a big responsibility for parents.’ I thought for a moment that it really didn’t pertain too much to me since I wasn’t married and didn’t have any children. But almost as quickly I thought, ‘But it does pertain to me. I am a member of a family. I am a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a cousin,

a niece, and a granddaughter. I do have responsibilities—and blessings—because I am a member of a family. Even if I were the only living member of my family, I am still a member of God’s family, and I have a responsibility to help strengthen other families.’”

Fortunately, we are not left alone in our efforts. “The greatest help,” says Sister Thompson, “we will have in strengthening families is to know and follow the doctrines of Christ and rely on Him to help us.”²

From Our History

“When Sister Bathsheba W. Smith served as the fourth Relief Society general president [from 1901 to 1910], she saw a need to strengthen families, and so she established mother education lessons for Relief Society sisters. The lessons included counsel on marriage, prenatal care, and child rearing. These lessons supported President Joseph F. Smith’s teachings about the Relief Society helping women in their roles at home:

“Wherever there is ignorance or at least a lack of understanding in regard to the family, duties of the family, with regard to obligations that should exist and that do rightfully exist between husband and wife and between parents and

children, there this organization exists or is near at hand, and by the natural endowments and inspiration that belongs to the organization they are prepared and ready to impart instruction with reference to those important duties.”³

NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 101.
2. Barbara Thompson, “I Will Strengthen Thee; I Will Help Thee,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 117.
3. *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 153.

From the Scriptures

Proverbs 22:6; 1 Nephi 1:1; 2 Nephi 25:26; Alma 56:46–48; Doctrine and Covenants 93:40

What Can I Do?

1. How can I help the sisters I watch over to strengthen families?
2. How can I be a righteous influence in my family?

For more information, go to reliefsociety.lds.org.