

**By President
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Called of God and Sustained by the People

As members of the Church, we are invited often to sustain people in callings to serve. Years ago an 18-year-old student showed me what it means to sustain the Lord's servants. I am still blessed by his humble example.

He had just begun his first year in college. He was baptized less than a year before he left home to begin his studies at a large university. There I served as his bishop.

As the school year began, I had a brief interview with him in the bishop's office. I remember little of that first conversation except that he spoke of his challenges in a new place, but I will never forget our second conversation.

He asked to see me in my office. I was surprised when he said, "Could we pray together, and may I be voice?" I was about to say that I had already prayed and expected that he had as well. Instead I agreed.

He began his prayer with a testimony that he knew the bishop was called of God. He asked God to tell me what he should do in a matter of great spiritual consequence. The young man told God he was sure the bishop already knew his needs and would be given the counsel he needed to hear.

As he spoke, the specific dangers he would face came to my mind. The counsel was simple but given in great clarity: pray always, obey the commandments, and have no fear.

That young man, one year in the Church, taught by example what God can do with a leader as he is sustained by the faith and prayers of those he is called to lead. That young man demonstrated for me the power of the law of common consent in the Church (see D&C 26:2). Even though the Lord calls His servants by revelation, they can function only after being sustained by those they are called to serve.

By our sustaining vote, we make solemn promises. We promise to pray for the Lord's servants and that He will lead and strengthen them (see D&C 93:51). We pledge that we will look for and expect to feel inspiration from God in their counsel and whenever they act in their calling (see D&C 1:38).

That promise will need to be renewed in our hearts frequently. Your Sunday School teacher will try to teach by the Spirit, but just as you might do, your teacher may make mistakes in front of the class. You, however, can decide to listen and watch for the moments when you can feel inspiration come. In time you will notice fewer mistakes and more frequent evidence that God is sustaining that teacher.

As we raise a hand to sustain a person, we commit to work for whatever purpose of the Lord that person is called to accomplish. When our children were small, my wife was called to teach the little children in our

ward. I not only raised my hand to sustain her, but I also prayed for her and then asked permission to help her. The lessons I received of appreciation for what women do and of the Lord's love for children still bless my family and my life.

I spoke recently with that young man who sustained his bishop years ago. I learned that the Lord and the people had sustained him in his call as a missionary, as a stake president, and as a father. He said as our conversation ended, "I still pray for you every day."

We can determine to pray daily for someone called by God to serve us. We can thank someone who has blessed us by his or her service. We can decide to step forward when someone we have sustained asks for volunteers.¹

Those who uphold the Lord's servants in His kingdom will be sustained by His matchless power. We all need that blessing.

NOTE

1. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 211–12.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

After sharing the message, consider reading the following quote: "The Lord will make you an instrument in His hands if you are humble, faithful, and diligent. . . . You will receive added strength when you are sustained by the congregation and set apart" (*Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 20). Have the family gather around a heavy object and ask one person to try to lift it. Adding one more person at a time, invite other family members to help lift the object. Discuss what happens when

everyone helps. Consider emphasizing President Eyring's counsel about practical ways we can sustain others in their callings.

YOUTH

Thanks to My Sunday School Teacher

Name withheld

My Sunday School class isn't always reverent. I love listening to the lesson every week, but sometimes it seems as though others in my class do not. Often they talk to each other or play games on electronic devices while our teacher is trying to teach us. Sadly, I sometimes find myself part of the problem.

One week we were worse than usual, and by the end of class, our teacher was reduced to tears because nobody would listen to her lesson. As we walked out of the classroom, I felt bad for her.

The next Sunday our teacher explained that she had prayed a lot that week, seeking for guidance, and it occurred to her that she needed to show us a Church film. She began the movie, which was about the life of Jesus Christ and the miracles He performed.

As I thought about the film that evening, I felt something different. Suddenly I realized that I was feeling the Spirit, more so than I ever had before. Immediately I decided that I wanted to make changes in my life to be more like the Savior, and I realized the experience in Sunday School that day had greatly strengthened my testimony. I am so thankful for my Sunday School teacher and everything she does for our class every week.



Visiting Teaching—a Sacred Assignment

Prayerfully 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.

Faith, Family, Relief

As visiting teachers, we have an important spiritual mission to fulfill. “The bishop, who is the ordained shepherd of the ward, cannot possibly watch over all of the Lord’s sheep at one time. He is dependent on inspired visiting teachers to help him.”¹ Seeking and receiving revelation as to who should be assigned to watch over each sister is essential.

Inspiration begins as members of the Relief Society presidency prayerfully discuss the needs of individuals and families. Then, with the bishop’s approval, the Relief Society presidency gives the assignment in a way that helps sisters understand that visiting teaching is an important spiritual responsibility.²

Visiting teachers sincerely come to know and love each sister, help her strengthen her faith, and give service when needed. They seek personal inspiration to know how to respond to the spiritual and temporal needs of each sister they visit.³

“Visiting teaching becomes the

Lord’s work when our focus is on people rather than percentages. In reality, visiting teaching is never finished. It is more a way of life than a task.”⁴

From the Scriptures

Matthew 22:36–40; John 13:34–35; Alma 37:6–7

From Our History

Eliza R. Snow, the second Relief Society general president taught, “I consider the office of a teacher a high and holy office.” She counseled visiting teachers “to be filled with the Spirit of God, of wisdom, of humility, of love” before they visited homes so they would be able to ascertain and meet spiritual needs as well as temporal ones. She said, “You may feel to talk words of peace and comfort, and if you find a sister feeling cold, take her to your heart as you would a child to your bosom and warm [her] up.”⁵

As we go forth in faith as the early Relief Society sisters did, we will have the Holy Ghost with us and be inspired to know how to

help each sister we visit. “Let [us] seek for wisdom instead of power,” said Sister Snow, “and [we] will have all the power [we] have wisdom to exercise.”⁶

NOTES

1. Julie B. Beck, “Relief Society: A Sacred Work,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 114.
2. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 9.5; 9.5.2.
3. See *Handbook 2*, 9.5.1.
4. Julie B. Beck, *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 114.
5. Eliza R. Snow, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 108.
6. Eliza R. Snow, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 45–46.

What Can I Do?

1. How can I improve in my ability to fulfill my important responsibility as a visiting teacher?
2. As a visiting teacher, how can I help other sisters fulfill their responsibility as visiting teachers?

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

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