

ASIA LOCAL PAGES

ASIA AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Bring the Sabbath Day into Our Homes

By Elder Ming-Shun Kuan

Of the Seventy

We have recently received instruction from the prophet and apostles of God pertaining to how keeping the Sabbath day holy both at church and in our homes will increase our faith in Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Indeed, Church leaders have been instructed that in all Church-related planning and arrangements, counsel should be sought from ward council members in preparing Sabbath-day sacrament meetings to enable members to have a spiritual experience. The new Church training *Teaching in the Savior's Way*¹ is also aimed at ensuring that all classes taught on the Sabbath be taught by the Spirit to comprise the pure doctrines of the gospel. Teaching in this manner will help God's children obtain greater faith in our Savior, and thus become more like Him.

In addition to our leaders striving hard in preparations and arrangements to ensure all Sabbath-day meetings become spiritual experiences, we members also have an essential role to be diligent in keeping the Sabbath day holy in our homes. In order to bring the Sabbath into our homes, we must place the Atonement of Jesus Christ

at the center of our lives. If Jesus Christ's Atonement is at the center of our lives, we should also place at the center of our lives the sacrament, which is a symbol of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. We learn from the scriptures that we should prepare for sacrament meeting with a broken heart and a contrite spirit: "Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah. . . . Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered" (2 Nephi 2:6–7).



Teaching in the Savior's Way

The goal of every gospel teacher—every parent, every formally called teacher, every home teacher and visiting teacher, and every follower of Christ—is to teach the pure doctrine of the gospel, by the Spirit, in order to help God's children build their faith in the Savior and become more like Him.



Elder
Ming-Shun Kuan

In order to partake the sacrament with a "broken heart and a contrite spirit," we must prepare ahead, long before each Sunday's sacrament meeting arrives. Every week, each of us has experiences in our lives that detract us from the teachings of our Savior. It is important, therefore, that on Saturday night, before the Sabbath comes, we take care of all of our affairs in advance. As recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, this should consist of "prepar[ing] with singleness of heart" (D&C 59:13). We should not allow television programs or the Internet to interfere with our preparations, planning instead to turn these devices off earlier rather than later. In order to prepare for the Sabbath day, we should prepare our hearts and the food we will need that day in advance. We should also set aside some time for scriptures and hymns, and slow down the pace of our lives so that our hearts are calm. We should get to bed early, and then arise earlier on Sunday morning; "retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated" (D&C 88:124).

Once Sunday arrives, we should prepare all necessary matters. We

should be in no hurry. We should calmly proceed to church and arrive early enough to find our seats prior to the beginning of sacrament meeting so that we can then prepare to partake of the sacrament as we enjoy the prelude music. During the administration of the sacrament, we ought to focus our minds on the Savior's Atonement and sacrifice. We should strive to understand truly our Savior's great sacrifice, His Atonement, and our communication with Him. Moreover, we should always remember Him and resolve even more fervently to keep His commandments so that we can always have His Spirit to be with us. As we prepare for and partake of the sacrament in this manner, let us also review our baptismal covenants so that we may once again become clean and grow closer to the Lord. Partaking of the sacrament will also allow us to get a fresh start from the setbacks we suffer in life and provide us with courage and strength to face those challenges presented to us in the following week.

Such a wonderful experience should not just last during our three-hour meeting block and end when we return home. We have also been invited to keep the Sabbath day holy in our homes so that the entire Sabbath can be a delight. To ensure that the gospel is passed on from generation to generation, a key

component is studying and putting into practice the gospel of Jesus Christ. Hence, the Sabbath is the best time to put into practice the gospel of Jesus Christ, and we should make adjustments to our family affairs so that Sabbath-day observance in our homes is a "delight."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke about family councils in the April 2016 general conference. He said, "You may want to consider holding [a] general family council on Sunday, which is the first day of the week; families can review the past week and plan for the coming week. This may be exactly what your family needs to help make the Sabbath a delightful experience."² Though the Church does not lay down laws indicating what we should or should not do on the Sabbath, the family council can provide a forum for discussion among family members. When we understand that the goal of the Sabbath is to "keep [ourselves] unspotted from the world" (D&C 59:9), we can then hold discussions in our family councils on how to go about our various activities so that the spirit of Sabbath-day worship can flourish in our homes.

On Sabbath days, as we teach and put into practice the truth gospel of Jesus Christ in our homes, we should combine a wide variety of meaningful

methods and Church teachings. For example, we could arrange for family members to assist a neighbor in need. Serving others allows us to put into practice those behaviors that characterize true disciples of Jesus Christ. Such service can be very simple, like visiting the sick or the lonely, writing to a missionary or a far-away family member. As a family, we can also work together on our family history so that new generations can learn about those who have gone before, and "turn the hearts of the children to their fathers." Through family history they can learn about their roots and prepare to perform saving ordinances for their ancestors in the temple to "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children" (D&C 98:16; see also Malachi 4:6; 3 Nephi 25:6). There are indeed many ways by which we can lengthen our wonderful experience of partaking of the sacrament at church.

I remember receiving these teachings when I was still a single adult. I would venture over to a hidden corner of the campus after church, where I would partake of the food I had previously prepared and pondered upon the teachings I heard at church. I would also regularly schedule time to go visit a former military buddy of my father. He was a single man, so I went to be with him, to talk to him. Our family now tries to heed the counsel of our prophet and



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apostles by diligently striving to make our Sabbaths delightful. We prepare food together and discuss the gospel together. I consider these to be some of the most prized moments of my life.

I know that when leaders of the Church and families work together, we will receive the blessings of the Sabbath. Our faith in our Heavenly Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ, will also increase and will prepare us

to return to Heavenly Father's presence. I am grateful that we are able to have the gospel in our lives and am especially grateful for the Atonement of Jesus Christ. I know this to be true and I leave with you my testimony. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See *Teaching in the Savior's Way*, lds.org/manual/teaching-in-the-saviors-way.
2. M. Russell Ballard, "Family Councils," *Liahona*, May 2016, 64.

The Testimony of the Apostles and Prophets

President Berrett, India Bangalore Mission

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it" (*History of the Church*, 3:30). I am grateful for the multiple times when Joseph Smith saw and talked with Christ.

We have scriptural record of several of those visits. On February 16, 1832, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were engaged in the work of divinely inspired revisions to the New Testament. They record that it became "apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled" (introduction to Doctrine and Covenants 76). They engaged in earnest prayer and in response received the revelation/vision we now know as the 76th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. As part of that vision, they saw the Savior. They wrote this record of their experience:



President and Sister Berrett

“And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

“That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God” (D&C 76:23–25).

On another occasion, shortly after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were praying in that holy place. They write:

“The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened.

“We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber.

“His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone

above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

“I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father” (D&C 110:1–4).

I am grateful that through Joseph Smith’s records of these visits, we have a clear and correct understanding of the reality of Jesus Christ and of His Father. I am grateful for how this knowledge helps build my faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. It helps me love and worship the Savior more completely. I have never seen Him, but I have the testimony of the Apostles and prophets. The Savior lives. I so testify. ■

Faith and Challenges

Elder Ramesh Mallula, India New Delhi Mission

As a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I have been blessed abundantly. I was baptized in December 2011. Inspired by my ward members, I wanted to serve a mission. However, because my family are not members of the Church, it was a very difficult decision. When I asked my family about serving a mission, they did

not support the idea and wanted me to stay at home. Even my friends thought serving a mission would be a foolish decision.

Among the difficulty of not receiving support from my family and friends, my determination to serve a mission was still strong. I began fasting and praying that God would provide a way for me to serve a mission.

As I prayed and fasted, I began preparing for a mission.

My father’s heart was softened because of my prayers and my determination to serve, and he gave me permission to go on a mission. While on my mission, my father was hospitalized due to health complications. I then received a call from my mother, asking me to return home from my mission.

Again I was faced with a very difficult decision: to continue and finish my mission, or return home to my family.



Ramesh Mallula

Eventually I made the decision that I would return home so that I could help my family during this struggle.

As I met with my mission president to inform him of my decision, I was not able to voice the decision I had made.

After I met with the mission president, I was blessed to meet a brother who was willing to listen to my concerns that I was being faced with. He shared with me some of his mission experiences and told me the story of Abraham and Isaac.

Everyone knows how the story goes.

Abraham loved his only son, Isaac, beyond imagination; however, Abraham was asked by the Lord to sacrifice his son. Abraham loved God more than anything else, and was willing to obey no matter what sacrifice was required. (See Genesis 22.)

This wonderful story touched my heart, and a scripture from Book of Mormon popped into my head: “And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that he shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you” (3 Nephi 18:20).

After this great spiritual experience,

I felt prompted that I should continue my mission and I made the decision to follow God’s commandments no matter what sacrifice was required.

Four days later, I received a call from the same brother I had confided my situation in. He told me that he had visited my home and that my father was

doing OK now. He also said that my mother was taking care of the family.

I know that when we ask Heavenly Father that which is right, we will definitely receive those things. I believe that this gospel is true. I know that the Church was restored by Joseph Smith. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

Seminary—Bringing Us Closer to Christ

It’s been more than two years since we have been attending seminary. It has helped me to prepare to serve the Lord and learn the word of God. I know that the scriptures are important in my life. Attending seminary classes helps me feel the Spirit every time. I know that Jesus Christ loves me and wants me to become like Him. I know that attending seminary classes is one of the important decisions I’ve made. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

—Shiny, West Marredpally Third Ward

I’ve been attending seminary for the past two years. I felt it was

a burden in the beginning because of my tuition timings. After some time, I felt that attending seminary was not a burden and was not bad. I have learned many things from seminary. I have made many friends, and together we have learned the gospel. After each seminary class, I share what I learned with my parents and they are happy and indeed have learned from me. Attending seminary not only cleared my doubts but also helped me learn about the gospel. I testify of these things, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

—Jessy, West Marredpally Third Ward

I testify that attending seminary regularly helped me feel the Spirit each time and also strengthened my testimony. Seminary is the place where I learn more about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. I'm grateful for this wonderful program. I know that my Redeemer lives and loves me. I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

—Pavitra, West Marredpally Third Ward

Attending seminary for three years has helped me better understand the scriptures in detail and has strengthened my testimony. I had the courage to share the gospel with my friends and family. Going to seminary is an opportunity where I learn and know how to serve a mission. I know these things to be true. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

—Kevin, West Marredpally Second Ward

I have been attending seminary for three years. It has helped me receive great strength to overcome temptations and challenges. I testify that every time I face a temptation or a challenge, the word of God comes to my mind and helps me overcome it. Attending seminary is difficult for me because I'm the only member in my family, yet I attend it regularly because it's worth it. I know that seminary helps me prepare for missionary work. I know these things to be true. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

—Balaraj, West Marredpally Second Ward

By attending seminary classes, I learned more about gospel. Since I joined the Church, I have felt that God is always there to help me in my troubles. I know that the Prophet Joseph Smith did restore the gospel and the Church. I know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true Church and that President Thomas S. Monson is our living prophet. I know Book of Mormon to be true. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

—Prakash, As Rao Nagar Ward

I know that Jesus is the Only Begotten Son of Heavenly Father. I believe He has done many miracles in my life. By having faith in Him, I have received many blessings. I'm very grateful for the gospel and I know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true. I testify of these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

—Dheeraj Nakka, West Marredpally First Ward

The Lord has helped me in many ways to face challenges of life. One way He has helped me is through seminary. As Matthew 20:16 says, "Many be called, but few chosen." This scripture means a lot to me because I was the only student in the Vizag district to attend seminary, but my teacher taught me every day without fail even when I was the only one attending.

By attending seminary class every morning, I was blessed every day. There were times I missed the classes, but those were the days where I have felt there was something lacking and felt less achieved. In spite of my weakness, God has never stopped blessing and loving me.

When seminary started in Vizag last year, it was already late and we had to complete the makeup classes before the semester ended. Apart from attending the seminary classes, I made sure to take some time out of my daily schedule to complete the makeup classes and the Old Testament course. I have learned a lot in seminary. My understanding of gospel doctrine and temples has become deeper. It helped me fulfill the assignments given by our leaders.

I know that I'm the daughter of Heavenly Father. I know that my Redeemer lives and guides me in everything. I know that the Book of Mormon and Bible testify of Christ. I know Thomas S. Monson is our living prophet. I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

—Saritha Potnuru, Vishakapatnam

I have known this Church for the past four years, but I was only recently baptized. I don't know the gospel very well. But when I went to seminary, I learned many things. I didn't have much knowledge about

SABBATH DAY OBSERVANCE

Sabbath—the Greatest Joy

By Punitha Amalaraj

In a world that is deteriorating alarmingly with the lack of values, the greater solace and rest that I can experience, especially as a Latter-day Saint, is only by observing the Sabbath spiritually tuned.

When I got baptized in the year 2009, I knew little. But the idea of knowing more and growing substantially in the gospel was the burning desire of my heart. The journey in pursuit of eternal happiness was not an easy climb. There were many obstacles and limitations.

Sometimes the greatest trials that I faced were self-created problems because of incorrect decisions.

The Sabbath comes out as my greatest reliever of all these pains. Time and again, Leaders of our Church have often emphasized the importance of this commandment, that is to keep the Sabbath day holy.

My family was the sweetest thing that I am blessed with. They listened with the same desire as I was learning. We kept moving ahead steadily, doing all the things that were required. Oh, how the Sabbath day brought happiness into our lives! Some things that have helped us make the Sabbath a great joy are simple things:

the gospel and now I am learning a lot. My seminary teacher always helps me have courage, and she taught me so many things that I am very grateful for my Heavenly Father for giving us such a wonderful teacher. I used to go play cricket early in the morning, but now I am happy to come to seminary classes. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

—Puppala Surendra

I am very grateful for my Heavenly Father. I learned many things last year in the Old Testament, and now I am learning many things from the New Testament. I learned many things in my seminary classes that help me and my family in every situation. Because of seminary, me and my family were blessed. I am thankful to God for this wonderful opportunity, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

—Donipati Gayathri

I am very thankful to my Heavenly Father for this opportunity. I am very much blessed because of seminary. I have learned many things that help me overcome Satan's temptations. I also learned many things from the prophets and Church leaders. I am thankful for my seminary teacher who helps me attend seminary. She taught us everything. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

—Vasamsetty Veerababu

I am very much thankful to my Father in Heaven for giving me such a wonderful opportunity. I am so thankful to God for helping me at all times. I learned many things in my seminary classes. Seminary is the place where we can learn more about the gospel. I am grateful for my seminary teacher who helps me to wake up early in the morning. It helps me draw closer to Heavenly Father. Seminary helps me in my school life and also in my family life. I learned many things in the Old Testament last year. I share these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

—Mogili, Gowry Priya

This is my third year in seminary. I learned many things in my seminary classes. It helps me prepare for my mission and overcome my temptations and trials. It helps me in my education and in my family. I feel very happy to attend seminary. I am very grateful for my seminary teacher.

—Mogili, Satya Sai Prasanna

I learned many things in my seminary class. Seminary is the place where we can learn about gospel. It also helps me face tough situations and leads us to teach our families. My seminary teacher helps us a lot; she never gives up in anything and we learn many things about this Church. ■

—Beeja Divya



Punitha Amalaraj with her family

1. Arriving to church early. We always experienced a new renewed strength to begin our day early and have been successful for the past six years of our membership in the Church.
2. I plan every single day of the week, organizing my home with a routine, and managed my home effectively, which led to a hassle-free Sabbath day for the entire family.

The sacrament prayers said with great reverence fills the core of our souls. Again and again, our merciful Father in Heaven gives us an opportunity to mend our neglected ways and turn a new leaf of proving our worthiness. As we go about strengthening and renewing our baptismal

covenants, our souls expand with a new enthusiasm of heightened hopes for a better tomorrow.

I know with my heart that this commandment was given to me for my benefit and for my safety. I know that by keeping the Sabbath day holy, my Father in Heaven will be pleased with me and my righteous prayers will be answered. He will bless me and walk with me in my times of need. I know that He loves me and He knows me by my name. I can live the rest of my life with great hope, unceasing love, and a strong mind. I share my happiness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

Punitha Amalaraj, Coimbatore Second Branch, Coimbatore India District

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