

CARING FOR THE NEEDY

STUDY GUIDE



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*And he gave some, apostles; and
some, prophets; and some, evangelists;
and some, pastors and teachers;
For the perfecting of the saints, for the work
of the ministry, for the edifying
of the body of Christ: Till we all come
in the unity of the faith.*

Ephesians 4:11–13

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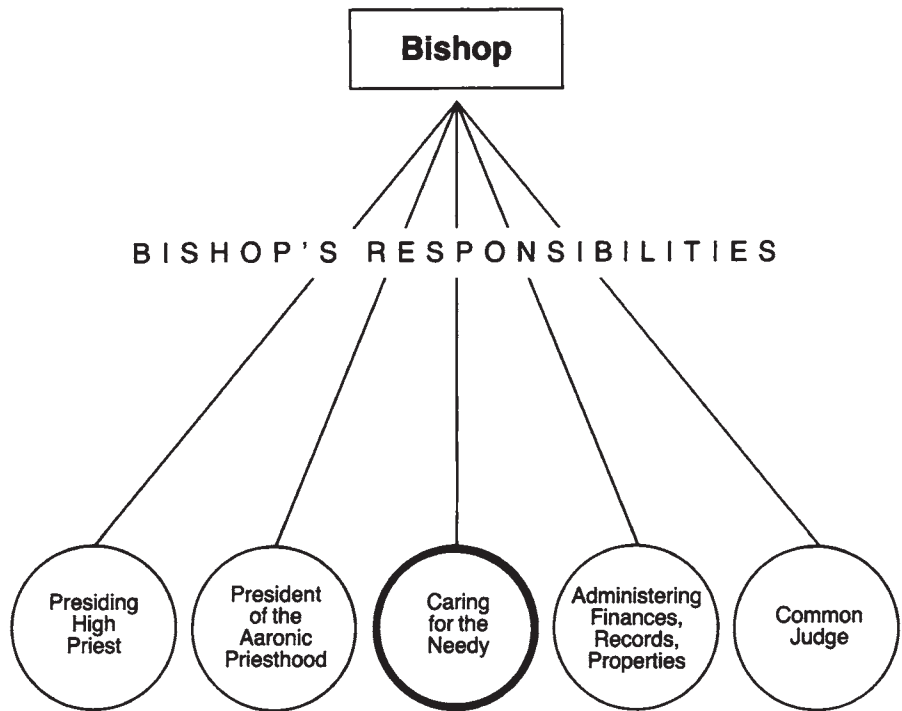
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INTRODUCTION

You have been called and ordained a bishop to bring about the Lord's purposes. Your calling has five areas of responsibility as shown in the adjacent diagram.



This study guide and the accompanying videocassette explain and demonstrate ways you can fulfill your responsibility to care for the needy. To simplify the material presented here, any reference to bishops includes branch presidents.

Instructions: Begin by viewing the introduction of the videocassette *Caring for the Needy*, then read Part 1 of this study guide and answer the questions. If the videocassette is not available, use this study guide by itself.

The primary responsibility for preventing need rests with each individual. Your responsibility as bishop is to see that members do all they can to help themselves, their families, and others. In joint efforts with the priesthood quorums and Relief Society, you should teach two key gospel principles related to welfare: self-reliance and generous giving.

Members prevent temporal need in their lives by obeying the commandments and living in harmony with these two principles. Teach self-reliance and generous giving by setting a worthy example and emphasizing these principles in interviews and meetings. Devote a portion of each welfare services committee meeting to training and to measuring progress toward the living of these principles.

Foster Self-reliance

Self-reliant individuals provide for themselves and their families through their own labor (see Genesis 3:19). They live providently, practice industry and thrift, remain free of unnecessary debt, care for their aged parents, and prepare for future emergencies (see D&C 38:30, 78:14).

"Let us work for what we need. Let us be self-reliant and independent. Salvation can be obtained on no other principle. Salvation is an individual matter, and we must work out our own salvation in temporal as well as in spiritual things" (Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Oct. 1976, p. 167; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, p. 124).

"No true Latter-day Saint, while physically or emotionally able will voluntarily shift the burden of his own or his family's well-being to someone else. So long as he can, under the inspiration of the Lord and with his own labors, he will supply himself and his family with the spiritual and temporal necessities of life" (Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, p. 124; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, pp. 77–78).

The priesthood quorums and Relief Society help members learn self-reliance skills. Such efforts may focus on literacy, education, career development, financial management, home production and storage, and physical, social, and emotional well-being.

A checklist is included on page 3 to help members become self-reliant. You can foster self-reliance and help prevent welfare need in the ward by asking individuals and families to complete the checklist.

Encourage Generous Giving

The Lord has said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Members give generously by imparting of their time, talents, and resources in the spirit of this declaration: "I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath" (Mosiah 4:26). Even those who have little can give (see Mosiah 4:24). Foster generous giving among ward members by encouraging them to give fast offerings and render compassionate service in the family, Church, and community.

Fast offerings, as a minimum, should be the equivalent value of two meals not eaten during the fast. Members should give more if they are able.

"I think that when we are affluent, as many of us are, that we . . . should be very generous and give, instead of the amount we saved by our two meals of fasting, perhaps much, much more—ten times more where we are in a position to do it" (Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, p. 184).

Compassionate service should be rendered by all members. The Lord commanded, "Remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple" (D&C 52:40). As members do all they can to help themselves, they are blessed

with a desire to reach out and help others. This desire manifests itself in acts of sharing, participation in organized service projects, and involvement in community service, particularly in behalf of the needy.

As members and leaders obey these principles, they approach the condition referred to as Zion. "The Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them" (Moses 7:18; see also Moses 7:17).

Instructions: Please view Part 1 of the videocassette *Caring for the Needy*.

Review Questions

After reading Part 1 of this study guide and viewing Part 1 of the videocassette *Caring for the Needy*, write answers to the following questions. You may also want to record promptings you have felt while reviewing the material. These notes will help you recall your thoughts after the training is completed.

1. Who has primary responsibility to prevent need?
2. What responsibilities do the priesthood quorums and the Relief Society have in preventing need?

3. What is your responsibility in preventing need?

4. In what ways do members in your ward need to become more self-reliant?

5. What will you do to encourage more generous giving among ward members?

Exercise

Complete the Self-reliance Checklist with your family. Set personal and family goals. By completing this exercise, you will be better able to help the priesthood quorums and the Relief Society use this valuable tool.

Instructions: Please go on to Part 2 of this study guide.

Self-reliance Checklist

Questions

- Do you have employment or other reliable sources of income that provide adequately for personal and family needs?
- Are you managing your finances to avoid unnecessary debt?
- Are you preparing financially for unexpected illness, emergencies, and retirement?
- Do you maintain your possessions and property?
- Can you sustain yourself and your family independent of the Church, the government, and others?
- Are you doing all you can to be physically fit and maintain proper weight?
- Do you follow practices that will prevent accidents and injury?
- Do you eat nutritiously and maintain sanitary conditions to prevent disease?
- Are you able to treat simple illness and injury, and do you seek proper medical care when needed?
- Are you able to cope with social and emotional challenges in your life?
- Can you read, write, and do basic arithmetic well enough to care for yourself and family?
- Are you practicing good work habits?
- Do you have adequate food, clothing, and other reserves to meet emergencies?

Action Plan

The Apostle Peter referred to Jesus as “the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25). By studying the example of the Savior, we see that a shepherd leads the flock. He gives individual care and attention. He knows his sheep, and they know and obey his voice.

Since you represent the Lord among his flock, he has entrusted to you the sacred duty of caring for the less fortunate.

“To the bishop is given all the powers and responsibilities which the Lord has specifically prescribed in the Doctrine and Covenants for the caring of the poor. . . . No one else is charged with this duty and responsibility, no one else is endowed with the power and functions necessary for this work. . . .

“By the word of the Lord, the sole mandate to care for and the sole discretion in caring for the poor of the Church is lodged in the bishop. . . . It is his duty and his only to determine to whom, when, how, and how much shall be given to any member of his ward from Church funds and as ward help.

“This is his high and solemn obligation, imposed by the Lord Himself. The bishop cannot escape this duty; he cannot shirk it; he cannot pass it on to someone else, and so relieve himself. Whatever help he calls in, he is still responsible” (J. Reuben Clark, Jr., quoted by Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, p. 115; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, p. 79).

Much of what you accomplish will be done through the efforts of others whom the Lord has called to assist you—your counselors, Melchizedek Priesthood quorum leaders, and Relief Society leaders. Acting under your direction, they can help search out the poor and needy, recommend assistance, and suggest work opportunities that will help those receiving welfare assistance to be self-reliant.

Seek out the Needy

As a bishop, it is your duty to seek out members who are in need. It is not enough to respond only when they come to you for assistance.

To serve effectively, you will need to be sensitive to the spiritual, physical, emotional, and economic conditions of ward members.

“Every bishop should *know the general condition of his ward members*. This he learns from observation, from visiting-teacher and home-teacher reports, from interviews, and from the whisperings of the Spirit” (Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, p. 138; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, p. 95).

Ways to identify needy ward members include—

1. *Promptings of the Spirit*. Because of your special calling, the Spirit may prompt you at any time to inquire about the well-being of someone in need. In all your contacts with ward members, remain alert and listen for the Spirit to reveal hidden needs. Always act on these promptings of the Spirit.
2. *Ward welfare services committee*. When this committee meets, provide opportunities for Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society leaders to report welfare needs. Treat all matters confidentially. Use the welfare services committee to become informed, make assignments, and call for progress reports.
3. *Home teaching and visiting teaching*. Ensure that home teachers and visiting teachers regularly visit the homes of all members. They should inquire about each family’s well-being and meet the family’s needs whenever they can. Have them report welfare needs that they observe.

Analyze the Circumstances

In assisting the needy, you can resolve uncertainty about how and when to help if you carefully analyze the exact nature and duration of the problem and the resources available to meet the need (see D&C 9:8–9). Whenever appropriate, involve the Melchizedek Priesthood quorum leader and the Relief Society president in making this analysis.

The Needs and Resources Analysis form will guide you in analyzing needs and listing available resources (PGWE1293; see page 7 of this guide). The form applies everywhere.

Exercise Discernment

As a bishop, you have been promised the gift of discernment to enable you to discern what forms of assistance will help the poor and needy (D&C 46:27–30).

“With this kind of spirit directing you bishops, you will be able to come to that revealed certainty that answers the oft-repeated questions of, Whom should I assist? How much assistance should I give? How often and how long should I assist? No hard-and-fast rule will ever be given in answer to these questions. As the common judge, you must live worthy to get the answers for each case from the only source provided—the inspiration of heaven” (Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, p. 140; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, p. 96).

Render Assistance

To decide what help to give, you will first need to determine the extent to which individual and family resources have been used. Welfare assistance is given to help people help themselves, to develop independence, not dependence. Seek to build integrity, self-respect, dignity, and soundness of character in each person assisted, leading to complete self-reliance.

Follow these guidelines when giving assistance:

1. *Draw upon the Lord's storehouse.* The Lord's storehouse includes the time, talents, skills, compassion, consecrated materials, and financial means of faithful Church members. These may be made available to the bishop in assisting the poor and needy everywhere. Using such resources makes possible the blessing of both givers and receivers as the needy are cared for in the Lord's own way (see D&C 104:16).

Fast offering funds are a primary financial resource for assisting needy members. You may use fast offerings to purchase food, clothing, shelter, medical assistance, or other aid for the poor. Fast offering funds are used only in direct assistance to the needy.

You may also use other Church welfare resources such as bishops' storehouses, LDS Social Services, Deseret Industries, canneries, employment centers, and production projects when they are available locally.

Involve the Relief Society president in rendering assistance. She should visit the home, help the recipient make an itemized list of basic food and clothing needs, and present an order for your review. Your signature authorizes service at a bishops' storehouse or purchases from a local vendor.

2. *Assist by mutual consent.* The bishop and the recipient should agree upon the type, extent, and timing of assistance.
3. *Give temporary help.* Church assistance is normally given to meet temporary needs. Work with the priesthood quorums and Relief Society to find permanent solutions to

long-term problems. Even the handicapped, aged, and others who may require long-term assistance should be given opportunities to do all they can to help themselves.

4. *Give assistance to sustain life.* "We assist with basic life-sustaining goods and services, not the maintenance of current living standards. Individuals and families may need to alter their standards of living in doing all they can to meet their own needs" (Thomas S. Monson, "Guiding Principles of Personal and Family Welfare," *Ensign*, Sept. 1986, p. 5).
5. *Make appropriate use of community resources.* Community services may be an acceptable source of assistance to needy members. These might include family counseling services, workshops for the handicapped, rehabilitation centers, and employment agencies. If members seek these forms of assistance, counsel them to adhere closely to gospel principles, considering this policy statement by the General Welfare Services Committee:

"No true Latter-day Saint, while physically or emotionally able, will voluntarily shift the burden of his own or his family's well-being to someone else. So long as he can, under the inspiration of the Lord and with his own labors, he will work to the extent of his ability to supply himself and his family with the spiritual and temporal necessities of life. . . .

"As guided by the Spirit of the Lord and through applying these principles, each member of the Church should make his own decisions as to what assistance he accepts, be it from government or other sources. In this way, independence, self-respect,

dignity, and self-reliance will be fostered, and free agency maintained" (*Welfare Services Resource Handbook* [1980], p. 21).

Advise members to comply with any laws that regulate the receipt of government aid, especially while receiving Church assistance.

Assign Work for Assistance

Work is both a spiritual and temporal necessity. Explaining the purposes of Church welfare, the First Presidency said: "Our primary purpose was to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self-respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3).

Members receiving welfare assistance should work to the extent of their abilities for what they receive. A work assignment engenders independence, industry, thrift, and self-respect by providing the recipient the right to earn what is received.

Consider these suggestions in assigning work for assistance:

1. *Assign work by mutual consent.* The bishop and recipient should agree upon the type and duration of work.
"If an individual refuses to do his part by working according to his ability, then the bishop has the prerogative of withholding assistance until a reformation of attitude is achieved" (Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, p. 139; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, p. 96).
2. *Assign work that helps other needy members.* Attempt to make work

assignments so that one person's labors help another person, thereby meeting needs locally and helping members serve one another.

3. *Assign work that is purposeful.* When possible, assigned work should help the individual become self-reliant.
4. *Involve the ward welfare services committee.* There are many creative ways to provide work opportunities. Involve committee members in identifying and providing work opportunities.

You may wish to review the Suggested Work Assignments as you make assignments (see page 9 of this study guide). Record the assignment in the space provided on the Needs and Resources Analysis form.

Instructions: Please view Part 2 of the videocassette *Caring for the Needy*.

Review Questions

After reading Part 2 of this study guide and viewing Part 2 of the videocassette *Caring for the Needy*, write answers to the following questions. You may also want to record promptings you have felt while reviewing the material. These notes will help you recall and apply your thoughts after the training is completed.

1. Write in your own words what you understand the bishop's welfare service duty to be.

2. How will you use the efforts of others (including the ward welfare services committee) to meet your ward members' needs?

3. What steps will you take to identify members in need?

Exercise

Identify an individual or family in the ward to whom you are now rendering assistance. Complete a Needs and Resources Analysis form with the family. By completing this exercise, you will become more comfortable using the form each time you analyze needs.

Instructions: Please go on to Part 3 of this study guide.

Needs and Resources Analysis

Name		Age
Address		Phone
Ward	Stake	
Where employed	Occupation	Phone
Names of family members		

Important!

As a general rule, the bishop or branch president should complete this form to—

1. Analyze individual and family needs.
2. Identify individual and family resources.
3. Identify additional needed resources and how such will be provided.
4. Make work assignments so that the recipient of Church assistance may work to the extent of his ability for commodities, services, or funds received.

Individual and Family Needs

Individual and Family Resources

Additional Resources Needed and how such will be provided

Assistance from Family Members Check persons willing and able to assist the individual. Explain any negative responses.

Husband's family	Notes/Explanation of negative response
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Father	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Mother	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Brothers	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Sisters	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Children	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Others:	

Wife's family	Notes/Explanation of negative response
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Father	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Mother	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Brothers	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Sisters	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Children	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Others:	

Assistance from Non-Family Members List names of those willing to help and amount they can provide per month.

Name	Relationship	Amount

Work for Assistance Note below the assignments accepted by the individual family members to work to the extent of their ability for commodities or services received.

Assignment	Days	Times

Signatures

Signature of head of household	Date	Signature of bishop/branch president	Date
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As you participate in the bishops' council, you will—

1. *Receive training* in such welfare duties as seeking out the needy, analyzing needs, rendering assistance, and assigning work. Occasionally, the stake presidency may attend and give instruction.
2. *Exchange ideas and experiences* that will help you learn your duty and find solutions to difficult cases.
3. *Screen community resources* and determine those to which you can appropriately refer members.
4. *Review trends* in fast offerings, welfare needs, and assistance. Be alert to changing needs and possible misuse of Church welfare resources.
5. *Discuss how to encourage welfare service* among all Church members, making a special effort to find ways of involving young men and women in personal acts of compassionate service. Consider ways of using Aaronic Priesthood holders to collect fast offerings.
6. *Evaluate the services*, management, and operation of Church welfare resources (where they exist). Identify opportunities for welfare recipients to work in these facilities. Arrange for volunteer labor and other needed resources.
7. *Identify work opportunities* and discuss ways to ensure that members work to the extent of their abilities for what they receive.
8. *Discuss ways the priesthood quorums and the Relief Society* can work with those who need welfare assistance.

Instructions: Please view Part 3 of the videocassette *Caring for the Needy*.

Review Questions

After reading Part 3 of this study guide and viewing Part 3 of the videocassette *Caring for the Needy*, write answers to the following questions. You may also want to record promptings you have felt while reviewing the material. These notes will help you recall and apply your thoughts after the training is completed.

1. What welfare concerns would you like to discuss in the stake bishops' welfare council?
2. What have you learned in stake bishops' welfare council that has helped you fulfill your welfare responsibilities more effectively?
3. List topics that you feel need to be addressed in discussions or training during council meetings.

Exercise

List work opportunities that have been effective in helping welfare recipients. (You may want to consult the following list of suggested work assignments.) Completing this exercise will help you prepare to participate in a future stake bishops' welfare council meeting.

Suggested Work Assignments

This list of work suggestions has been compiled to help bishops assign suitable work for persons assisted by the Church. Review this list to delete any suggestions that do not apply in your area, and add possible work assignments available locally.

- A. Work on Church Meetinghouse and Grounds:
 1. Painting and repairing
 2. Building projects
 3. Tending heating plant
 4. Assisting custodian
 5. Trimming shrubbery
 6. Mowing and caring for lawns
 7. Planting and growing flowers
 8. Shoveling snow
 9. Giving custodial help for social activities
- B. Other Suggestions:
 1. Assisting ward clerks with clerical and record work
 2. Assisting librarians
 3. Caring for homes of sick, poor, and aged
 4. Assisting young students who may be faltering in school subjects
 5. Gathering and compiling important ward historical data of church and ward functions
 6. Teaching trades and skills to others in the ward
 7. Taking care of children for working mothers and during special meetings

If you have access to bishops' storehouses, production projects, canneries, Deseret Industries, and employment centers, contact the unit manager to determine work assignments in these facilities.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Scriptures

Refer to the Topical Guide under such subjects as—

- Charity
- Service
- Labor
- Storehouse
- Poor
- Bishop
- Almsgiving
- Work
- Fasting
- Generosity
- Welfare

Audiovisual Materials

Applying Welfare Principles in Our Lives
(videocassette, VNVV174A)

Manuals and Handbooks

Welfare Services Resource Handbook
(PGWE1282)

Bishop's Guide (PBCT0124)

Articles in Church Publications

Romney, Marion G. In Conference Report, Oct. 1977, pp. 114–18.
(Also *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, pp. 79–81.)

Romney, Marion G. In Conference Report, Oct. 1979, pp. 137–41.
(Also *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, pp. 94–96.)

Monson, Thomas S. In Conference Report, Oct. 1980, pp. 129–34.
(Also *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, pp. 89–91.)

Monson, Thomas S., "Guiding Principles of Personal and Family Welfare," *Ensign*, Sept. 1986, pp. 3–5.

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