

the direction of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, whose church it really is.

And we bear this witness to you in all soberness, leaving you our love and our blessings, and our most fond affection. We love you, we want you, and we do it in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is our Redeemer. Amen. □

President Harold B. Lee

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr. of the First Council of Seventy has just spoken to us.

Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us.

Elder Franklin D. Richards

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

My dear brothers and sisters, this has indeed been a wonderful conference—another inspiring spiritual experience. I have been deeply impressed and strengthened by the prayers, the music, and the spoken word.

We have prayed that the Spirit of the Lord would be with us, and our prayers have been answered. Prayer plays a vital part in our worship, our religious thinking, and our daily lives.

Importance of prayer

In the time allotted to me today I would like to further consider with you the importance of prayer.

Implanted in the heart of every person, regardless of his or her race or color, is the desire to worship, in some manner, a divine being. The Prophet Joseph Smith observed that "it is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God, and to know that we may converse with Him as one man converses with another. . . ." (*Documentary History of the Church*, vol. 6, p. 305.)

With the knowledge that we can converse with God as one man converses with another, we also understand that we not only have a divine spark within us, but that we are actually spirit children of our Father in heaven.

Prayer, being the primary method of communication between God and man, plays an important part in practically

every religion, whether Christian or otherwise. This is particularly true in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Prayer opened new dispensation

Prayer opened the heavens to the Prophet Joseph Smith and thus opened the dispensation of the fulness of times. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is truly a monument to prayer.

I am most grateful to the Prophet Joseph Smith for his simple belief in prayer. The answer to his prayer restored light and truth to mankind regarding the Godhead and many other great truths.

I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet of God, and that through him the power to act in the name of God has been restored to the earth.

I likewise bear witness that President Joseph Fielding Smith is a prophet of God and directs The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the earth today.

I have, throughout my life, had my prayers answered very directly many times. Prayer has been a great blessing to me and to my family.

The Lord has repeatedly told us to pray always and that he will pour out his Spirit upon us and bless us greatly. (See D&C 19:38.) I have frequently con-

templated what "pray always" really means and how this injunction can be effectively applied in our lives.

Doing our part

Brigham Young, in his realistic manner, stated: "You know that it is one peculiarity of our faith and religion never to ask the Lord to do a thing without being willing to help him all that we are able; and then the Lord will do the rest." (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, p. 293.)

"Please, Lord, help me to help myself." I am convinced that this prayer for increased personal powers—spiritual strength, greater inspiration, and greater confidence—is one that God always answers. We can learn to solve our problems with God's help, making him our partner.

Supplementing prayer

This being the case, what can we do to supplement prayer, or what is our part? Let me suggest a few examples:

As we pray for wisdom and knowledge, our part can be to study and apply ourselves.

As we ask for health and strength of body and of mind, we can supplement prayer by living the Word of Wisdom.

As we ask for protection, our part could well be to use good judgment, such as driving carefully, if we are traveling by car.

When we pray for inspiration, we should live close to the Lord by keeping his commandments. The Savior said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15.)

When we pray for direction, remember the counsel of the Lord given to Oliver Cowdery in the ninth section of the Doctrine and Covenants: Study your problems out in your own mind. Make a decision and then ask the Lord if your decision is right; if so, you will receive a burning of your bosom or a good feeling; if not, you will receive a stupor of thought or a questionable

feeling. Then whatever the feeling you receive, have the courage to follow it. This is doing your part.

The question is frequently asked, What should one pray for? Well, prayer being the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed, pray for your righteous desires. But never forget that whatever our prayers are, we can supplement our heavenly request with some positive action on our part.

How to pray

We members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who make prayer a part of our lives, sometimes fail to recognize that many honest souls throughout the world are wondering how to pray, when to pray, and where to pray.

Let's consider for a moment how to pray. The Savior told us how when he said:

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

"Give us this day our daily bread.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." (Matt. 6:9-13.)

This sample prayer envisions appreciation, simplicity, and the avoidance of vain repetitions. Our prayers should simply be our soul's sincere desire. In our church worship there are only three set prayers: the baptismal and two sacramental prayers. We are also directed to close all of our prayers to our Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ.

When to pray

Now, when to pray: Generally, I think we might say that we should pray in secret, with our families, and in worship meetings and public assemblies.

Secret prayer should have a place

in every person's life. Again the Savior gave us the pattern when he said: ". . . when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (Matt. 6:6.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith, speaking on this subject, stated: "We would say to the brethren, seek to know God in your closets, call upon him in the fields. Follow the directions of the Book of Mormon, and pray over, and for your families, your cattle, your flocks, your herds, your corn, and all things that you possess; ask the blessing of God upon all your labors, and everything that you engage in." (DHC, vol. 5, p. 31.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith here amplifies the admonition to pray always.

Family prayer

Now with reference to family prayer: This should be a part of our daily worship. It should express our appreciation to our Father in heaven for our many blessings as well as our love for him. Here we should ask for our daily needs, as the Savior did in the Lord's Prayer.

The holding of family prayer is a powerful influence for good in every home where it is a regular practice. Morning and evening prayers, as well as the blessing on our food, bring us a sense of unity in our family as well as a closeness to our Father in heaven. Family prayer is indeed a stabilizing influence in our lives.

President John Taylor asked the Saints, "Do you have [family] prayers in your family? . . . And when you do, do you go through the operation like the guiding of a piece of machinery, or do you bow in meekness and with a sincere desire to seek the blessing of God upon you and your household? That is the way that we ought to do, and cultivate a spirit of devotion and trust in God, dedicating ourselves to him, and seeking his blessings." (JD, vol. 21, p. 118.)

Now regarding public prayers: Public prayers are a part of our worship services and many other public gatherings. These prayers again put us in a frame of mind to be inspired, strengthened, and motivated.

Our sacramental and baptismal prayers, of course, are certainly a very important part of our worship services.

Charge to parents

The Lord has also charged parents "to teach their children to pray, and walk uprightly before the Lord." (D&C 68:28.)

President Heber J. Grant, in referring to this matter, said, "I have little or no fear for the boy or the girl, the young man or the young woman, who honestly and conscientiously supplicate God twice a day for the guidance of His Spirit. I am sure that when temptation comes they will have the strength to overcome it by the inspiration that shall be given to them." (*Gospel Standards*, p. 26.)

As parents, it is clearly our duty and privilege to teach our children to pray, and regular family prayers set the pattern.

Approach in prayer

The Lord has promised to show mercy and to give comfort and strength to all who love him and keep his commandments. However, it is most important to remember that our attitude and approach in prayer should be similar to that of the Savior, in one of his last prayers in which he said, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup [ordeal] from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." Three times he prayed in this manner. And then "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him." (Luke 22:42-43.)

As we approach our Father in heaven with the spirit, "thy will be done," and as we personally do all we can to have our prayers answered, the Lord will do the rest, as President Brigham Young so aptly stated.

Laws governing prayer

It is important to recognize that the laws governing prayer are as immutable as those governing science. Response is predicated upon our having the proper attitude and so living that we are entitled to the whisperings of the Spirit. We must keep ourselves in tune with the Holy Ghost.

Yes, as we do our part or magnify our callings, the Lord will make us equal to the task by blessing us with strength of body and of mind far beyond our normal capacities.

May we this day commit ourselves to so live that we may go before the Lord with a clear conscience and ask for his divine guidance and assistance. As we do this, we will truly appreciate the words of the beautiful hymn: "O how praying rests the weary! Prayer will change the night to day." (*Hymns*, no. 31.)

May the choice blessings of our Father in heaven attend you, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. □

Elder Thomas S. Monson

Of the Council of the Twelve

"Finishers Wanted"

On sunlit days during the noon hour, the streets of Salt Lake City abound with men and women who for a moment leave the confines of the tall office buildings and engage in that universal delight called window shopping. On occasion I, too, am a participant.

One Wednesday I paused before the elegant show window of a prestigious furniture store. That which caught and held my attention was not the beautifully designed sofa nor the comfortable-appearing chair that stood at its side. Neither was it the beautiful chandelier positioned overhead. Rather, my eyes rested upon a small sign that

Following Elder Franklin D. Richards, the Choir sang "How Wondrous and Great" and "Keep My Words" without announcement.

President Harold B. Lee

Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve, has just spoken to us, followed by the singing of the Tabernacle Choir.

Following a brief interlude Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

Alexander Schreiner played a short interlude of organ music.

President Lee

We welcome those joining with us on television and radio in this third session of the 142nd Annual Conference of the Church.

Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve, will be our concluding speaker.

had been placed at the bottom right-hand corner of the window. Its message was brief: "Finishers Wanted."

The store had need of those persons who possessed the talent and the skill to make ready for final sale the expensive furniture that the firm manufactured and sold. "Finishers Wanted." The words remained with me as I returned to the pressing activities of the day.

In life, as in business, there has always been a need for those persons who could be called finishers. Their ranks are few, their opportunities many, their contributions great.