

# Food Storage

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Brethren of the priesthood, sisters of the Relief Society, President Henry D. Moyle suggested that when someone speaks we ought to get three things out of the message. First and least important (but still very important), we ought to get what is said. Second, and more important, we ought to have a spiritual experience. Third, and most important, we should keep the commitments we make to ourselves. Let's write them down and follow through. Don't ever make a commitment to yourself you don't intend to keep—if you do, you weaken your character.

For twenty-six years, since I was fifteen, I was involved in the grocery industry. I learned much about human nature during those years. I remember the effects that strikes, earthquakes, and rumors of war had on many very active Latter-day Saints. Like the five foolish virgins, they rushed to the store to buy food, caught in the panic of knowing that direction had been given by the prophet but not having followed that direction—fearful that maybe they had procrastinated until it was everlastingly too late.

It was interesting because only in Latter-day Saint communities did people seem to buy with abandon. It was not a few Latter-day Saints—it was a significant number. It caused great increases in sales. One such experience came when a so-called prophecy by someone outside the Church was greatly publicized.

How foolish we can sometimes be! We have a living prophet; we have God's living oracles, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles. Let us follow the Brethren and be constant. We need have no fear if we are prepared.

Brothers and sisters, what have we done in our stakes and wards to see that every Latter-day Saint has a year's reserve of food to sustain life? Let's not only keep teaching the principle, but let's also teach our people how.

This morning I would like to discuss food storage. Let me suggest three or four things we can do. Start by taking an inventory—take a physical count of all of your reserves. This would be a great family home evening project if you're prepared. If not, it may be terribly embarrassing to you in front of your family. Imagine how the powerful testimony you bear concerning a living prophet must sound to your children, who know that as a family head you have been counseled for years to have a year's reserve of food on hand. We need to know where we are. Every family should take an inventory—get all the facts.

Second, decide what is needed to bring your present reserve levels to a year's supply. Then make a list and prepare a plan. Consider first, what are the basics?—wheat (or grain from your locale), sugar or honey, dried milk, salt, and water. Most of us can afford such basics. Buy them from your monthly food budget allowance. The Church discourages going into debt to buy for storage.

Now that you know where you are and where you need to be, the third step is to work out a time schedule for when you will reach your goal. I suggest that one year from today we ought to have a year's supply of food in all active—and many inactive—members' homes in the Church. Where food storage violates the law of your land, then abide the law. However, even in those cases we can plant gardens and fruit trees and raise rabbits or chickens. Do all you can within the laws of your community, and the Lord will bless you when the time of need

comes. Now here are some suggestions how:

1. Follow the prophet. He has counseled us to plant a garden and fruit trees. This year don't just think about it—do it. Grow all the food you possibly can. Also remember to buy a year's supply of garden seeds so that, in case of a shortage, you will have them for the following spring. I'm going to tell you where to get the money for all the things I'm going to suggest.
2. Find someone who sells large bulk of grains, depending on your locale. Make arrangements to buy a ton or so of grain.
3. Find someone who sells honey in large containers and make arrangements to buy what you can afford on a regular basis or buy a little additional sugar each time you go to the store.
4. Purchase dry milk from the store or dairy, on a systematic basis.
5. Buy a case of salt the next time you go to the store. In most areas, 24 one-pound packages will cost you less than \$5.
6. Store enough water for each member of your family to last for at least two weeks.

Where the foods I mentioned are not available or are not basic in your culture or area, make appropriate substitutions.

Now you ask, "Where do I get the money for these things? I agree we need them, but I'm having a hard time making ends meet."

Here is how you do it. Use any one or all of these suggestions, some of which may not be applicable in your country:

1. Decide as a family this year that 25 or 50 percent of your Christmas will be spent on a year's supply. Many families in the Church spend considerable sums of money for Christmas. Half or part of these Christmas monies will go a long way toward purchasing the basics. I recall the Scotsman who went to the doctor and had an X-ray taken of his chest. Then he had the X-ray gift-wrapped and gave it to his wife for their anniversary. He couldn't afford a gift, but he wanted her to know his heart was in the right place. Brethren, give your wife a year's supply of wheat for Christmas, and she'll know your heart is in the right place.
2. When you desire new clothes, don't buy them. Repair and mend and make your present wardrobe last a few months longer. Use that money for the food basics. Make all of your nonfood necessities that you feasibly can, such as furniture and clothing.
3. Cut the amount of money you spend on recreation by 50 percent. Do fun things that do not require money outlay but make more lasting impressions on your children.
4. Decide as a family that there will be no vacation or holiday next year unless you have your year's supply. Many Church members could buy a full year's supply of the basics from what they would save by not taking a vacation. Take the vacation time and work on a family garden. Be together, and it can be just as much fun.
5. If you haven't a year's supply yet and you do have boats, snowmobiles, campers, or other luxury possessions, sell or trade one or two or more of them and get your year's supply.

6. Watch advertised specials in the grocery stores and pick up extra supplies of those items that are of exceptional value.

7. Change the mix in your family's diet. Get your protein from sources less expensive than meat. The grocery bill is one bill that can be cut. Every time you enter the store and feel tempted by effective and honest merchandising to buy cookies, candy, ice cream, non-food items, or magazines—don't! Think carefully; buy only the essentials. Then figure what you have saved and spend it on powdered milk, sugar, honey, salt, or grain.

The Lord will make it possible, if we make a firm commitment, for every Latter-day Saint family to have a year's supply of food reserves by April 1977. All we have to do is to decide, commit to do it, and then keep the commitment. Miracles will take place; the way will be opened, and next April we will have our storage areas filled. We will prove through our actions our willingness to follow our beloved prophet and the Brethren, which will bring security to us and our families.

Now regarding home production: Raise animals where means and local laws permit. Plant fruit trees, grapevines, berry bushes, and vegetables. You will provide food for your family, much of which can be eaten fresh. Other food you grow can be preserved and included as part of your home storage. Wherever possible, produce your nonfood necessities of life. Sew and mend your own clothing. Make or build needed items. I might also add, beautify, repair, and maintain all of your property.

Home production of food and nonfood items is a way to stretch your income and to increase your skills and talents. It is a way to teach your family to be self-sufficient. Our children are provided with much needed opportunities to learn the fundamentals of work, industry, and thrift. President Romney has said, "We will see the day when we will live on what we produce." (*Conference Reports*, April 1975, p. 165.)

I should like to address a few remarks to those who ask, "Do I share with my neighbors who have not followed the counsel? And what about the nonmembers who do not have a year's supply? Do we have to share with them?" No, we don't *have* to share—we *get* to share! Let us not be concerned about silly thoughts of whether we would share or not. Of course we would share! What would Jesus do? I could not possibly eat food and see my neighbors starving. And if you starve to death after sharing, "greater love hath no man than this ..." (John 15:13.)

Now what about those who would plunder and break in and take that which we have stored for our families' needs? Don't give this one more idle thought. There is a God in heaven whom we have obeyed. Do you suppose he would abandon those who have kept his commandments? He said, "If ye are prepared, ye need not fear." (D&C 38:30.) Prepare, O men of Zion, and fear not. Let Zion put on her beautiful garments. Let us put on the full armor of God. Let us be pure in heart, love mercy, be just, and stand in holy places. Commit to have a year's supply of food by April 1977.

Bishops and stake presidents, let us accept the challenge on behalf of the Saints in our wards and stakes. It will prove to be a very Christlike deed on your part. Follow through and check up one year from now and make certain we achieve results.

In his October 1973 conference address, President Ezra Taft Benson gave some excellent instructions about home storage:

"For the righteous the gospel provides a warning before a calamity, a program for the crises, a refuge for each

disaster. ...

“The Lord has warned us of famines, but the righteous will have listened to prophets and stored at least a year’s supply of survival food. ...

“Brethren and sisters, I know that this welfare program is inspired of God. I have witnessed with my own eyes the ravages of hunger and destitution as, under the direction of the president of the Church, I spent a year in war-torn Europe at the close of World War II, without my family, distributing food, clothing, and bedding to our needy members. I have looked into the sunken eyes of Saints, in almost the last stages of starvation. I have seen faithful mothers carrying their children, three and four years of age, who were unable to walk because of malnutrition. I have seen a hungry woman turn down food for a spool of thread. I have seen grown men weep as they ran their hands through the wheat and beans sent to them from Zion—America.

“Thanks be to God for a prophet, for this inspired program, and for Saints who so managed their stewardship that they could provide for their own and still share with others.” (“Prepare Ye,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, pp. 69, 81–82.)

I bear my humble witness to you that the great God of heaven will open doors and means in a way we never would have supposed to help all those who truly want to get their year’s supply. I know we will have time and money if we will commit and keep the commitment. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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