

## Truth revealed by God

Not every experience will be just like this; but to greater or lesser degree, that same Spirit will come into the life of every soul who desires to know the truth. Each member of the Church and each soul who sincerely investigates the teachings by study, prayer, and attending church will receive his answer.

It is as simple as that. Flesh and blood do not reveal it, but our Father which is in heaven. At some time in the investigation process, this confirming spirit will come into the soul, and truth will be the result. Should there be someone watching or listening at this time who is thinking of looking into the Church or studying its doctrines, we offer this to you. There is nothing complicated or difficult about it. It requires only a person who desires to know the truth and who is willing to turn to the

Lord with all his heart and ask about that which he reads and hears.

I, too, have felt that Spirit; I, too, know that God lives and that Jesus the Christ is his Son. This is not my philosophy; this is not my belief. This is a knowledge borne by the Spirit. This Church is true. Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet of God today. We are in the Lord's service. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Marion G. Romney

Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and President of the Australia Sydney Mission, has just addressed us.

President Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

## President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, humbly and gratefully I stand before you, for the second time today. I am grateful for this privilege, and I invoke the Spirit of the Lord to sustain us as I speak about the power of personal prayer and how we may improve our communications with our Heavenly Father.

All through my life the counsel to depend on prayer has been prized above almost any other advice I have received. It has become an integral part of me, an anchor, a constant source of strength, and the basis for my knowledge of things divine.

### Scriptural admonitions on prayer

"Remember that whatever you do or wherever you are, you are never alone" was my father's familiar counsel to me as a boy. "Our Heavenly Father is

always near. You can reach out and receive His aid through prayer." I have found this counsel to be true. Thank God we can reach out and tap that unseen power, without which no man can do his best.

The holy scriptures are replete with convincing admonitions regarding the importance of prayer, impressive examples of prayer, and counsels on how to pray effectively.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke 18:1.) "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." (Matt. 26:41.) In this dispensation, He said, "Pray always lest that wicked one have power in you, and remove you out of your place." (D&C 93:49.)

Through Joseph Smith the warning came: "And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his

hand in all things, and obey not his commandments." (D&C 59:21.)

Then we have this instruction from our risen Lord as He ministered among the Nephite people on the Western Hemisphere:

"Ye must watch and pray always, lest ye be tempted by the devil, and ye be led away captive by him. . . .

"Ye must watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation; for Satan desireth to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.

"Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name;

"And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you." (3 Ne. 18:15, 18-20.)

### Improving personal communication with our Heavenly Father

May I now suggest some ways to improve our communication with our Heavenly Father.

1. *We should pray frequently.* We should be alone with our Heavenly Father at least two or three times each day, "morning, mid-day, and evening," as the scriptures indicate. (Al. 34:21.) In addition, we are told to "pray always." (2 Ne. 32:9; D&C 88:126.) This means that our hearts should be full, drawn out in prayer unto [our Heavenly Father] continually." (Al. 34:27.)

2. *We should find an appropriate place where we can meditate and pray.* We are admonished that this should be "in your closets and your secret places, and in your wilderness." (Al. 34:26.) That is, it should be free from distraction, in "secret." (3 Ne. 13:5-6.)

3. *We should prepare ourselves for prayer.* If we don't feel like praying, then we should pray until we feel like praying. We should be humble. (D&C 112:10.) We should pray for forgiveness and mercy. (Al. 34:17-18.) We must forgive anyone against whom we have bad

feelings. (Mark 11:25.) Yet, the scriptures warn, our prayers will be vain if we "turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart [not] of [our] substance." (Al. 34:28.)

4. *Our prayers should be meaningful and pertinent.* Do not use the same phrases at each prayer. Each of us would become disturbed if a friend said the same few words to us each day, treated the conversation as a chore, and could hardly wait to finish it in order to turn on the TV and forget us.

In all of our prayers it is well to use the sacred pronouns of the scriptures—*Thee, Thou, Thy, and Thine*—when addressing Deity in prayer, instead of the more common pronouns of *you, your, and yours*. In this arrangement we show greater respect to Deity.

For what should we pray? We should pray about our work, against the power of our enemies and the devil, for our welfare and the welfare of those around us. (Al. 34:20, 22-25, 27.) We should counsel with the Lord pertaining to all our decisions and activities. (Al. 37:36-37.) We should be grateful enough to give thanks for all we have. (D&C 59:21.) We should confess His hand in all things. Ingratitude is one of our great sins.

The Lord has declared in modern revelation: "And he who receiveth all things with thankfulness shall be made glorious; and the things of this earth shall be added unto him, even an hundred fold, yea, more." (D&C 78:19.)

We should ask for what we need, taking care that we not ask for things that would be to our detriment. (James 4:3.) We should ask for strength to overcome our problems. (Al. 31:31-33.) We should pray for the inspiration and well-being of the president of the Church, the General Authorities, our stake president, our bishop, our quorum president, our home teachers, family members, and our civic leaders. Many other suggestions could be made; but with the help of the Holy Ghost, we will

know about what we should pray. (Rom. 8:26.)

5. *After making a request through prayer, we have a responsibility to assist in its being granted.* We should listen. Perhaps while we are on our knees, the Lord wants to counsel us.

"Sincere praying implies that when we ask for any virtue or blessing we should work for the blessing and cultivate the virtue." (David O. McKay, *True to the Faith*, Bookcraft, 1966, p. 208.)

### The power and efficacy of prayer

Out of personal experience, I know the efficacy and power of prayer. When I was a young missionary in Northern England in 1922, the opposition to the Church became very intense. The opposition became so strong that the mission president asked that we discontinue all street meetings, and in some cases tracting was discontinued.

My companion and I had been invited to travel over to South Shields to speak in the sacrament meeting. In the invitation they said, "We feel sure we can fill the little chapel. Many of the people over here do not believe the falsehoods printed about us. If you'll come, we're sure that we'll have a great meeting." We accepted.

We fasted and prayed sincerely and went to the meeting. My companion had planned to talk on the first principles. I had studied much in preparation for a talk on the apostasy. There was a wonderful spirit in the meeting. My companion spoke first and gave an inspirational message. I responded and talked with a freedom I had never experienced before in my life. When I sat down, I then realized that I had not mentioned the apostasy. I had talked on the Prophet Joseph Smith and borne my witness of his divine mission and to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. After the meeting had ended, several people came forward, some of them being nonmembers, and said, "Tonight we

received a witness that the gospel is true as you elders teach it. We are now ready for baptism."

This was an answer to our fasting and prayers, for we prayed to say only those things which would touch the hearts of the friends and investigators.

In 1946 I was assigned by President George Albert Smith to go to war-torn Europe and reestablish our missions from Norway to South Africa and to set up a program for the distribution of welfare supplies.

We established headquarters in London. We then made preliminary arrangements with the military on the continent. One of the first men I wished to see was the commander of the American forces in Europe. He was stationed in Frankfurt, Germany.

When we arrived in Frankfurt, my companion and I went in to seek an appointment with the general. The appointment officer said, "Gentlemen, there will be no opportunity for you to see the general for at least three days. He's very busy and his calendar is filled up with appointments."

I said, "It is very important that we see him, and we can't wait that long. We're due in Berlin tomorrow."

He said, "I'm sorry."

We left the building, went out to our car, removed our hats, and united in prayer. We then went back into the building and found a different officer at the appointment post. In less than fifteen minutes we were in the presence of the general. We had prayed that we would be able to see him and to touch his heart, knowing that all relief supplies contributed from any source were then required to be placed in the hands of the military for distribution. Our objective, as we explained it to the general, was to distribute our own supplies to our own people through our own channels, and also to make gifts for general child feeding.

We explained the welfare program and how it operated. Finally, he said, "Well, gentlemen, you go ahead and

collect your supplies; and by the time you get them collected, the policy may be changed." We said, "General, our supplies are already collected; they're always collected. Within twenty-four hours from the time we wire the First Presidency of the Church in Salt Lake City, carloads of supplies will be rolling toward Germany. We have many storehouses filled with basic commodities."

He then said, "I've never heard of a people with such vision." His heart was touched as we had prayed it would be. Before we left his office, we had a written authorization to make our own distribution to our own people through our own channels.

It is soul-satisfying to know that God is mindful of us and ready to respond when we place our trust in Him and do that which is right. There is no place for fear among men and women who place their trust in the Almighty, who do not hesitate to humble themselves in seeking divine guidance through prayer. Though persecutions arise, though reverses come, in prayer we can find reassurance, for God will speak peace to the soul. That peace, that spirit of serenity, is life's greatest blessing.

As a boy in the Aaronic Priesthood, I learned this little poem about prayer. It has remained with me:

*I know not by what methods rare,  
But this I know, God answers prayer.  
I know that He has given His Word,  
Which tells me prayer is always heard,  
And will be answered, soon or late.  
And so I pray and calmly wait.  
I know not if the blessing sought  
Will come in just the way I thought;  
But leave my prayers with Him alone,  
Whose will is wiser than my own,  
Assured that He will grant my quest,  
Or send some answer far more blest.*

(Eliza M. Hickok, "Prayer," *Best Loved Religious Poems*, ed. James Gilchrist Lawson, New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1933, p. 160.)

### Testimony of prayer

I bear witness to you, my beloved brethren and sisters, that God lives. He is not dead. I bear testimony that God our Father and His Beloved Son, our Savior and Redeemer, did in very deed appear to Joseph Smith. I know this as I know that I live. I testify there is a God in heaven who hears and answers prayer. I know this to be true. I would humbly urge all within the sound of my voice—member and nonmember alike—to keep in close touch with our Father in heaven through prayer. Never before in this gospel dispensation has there been a greater need for prayer. That we will constantly depend upon our Heavenly Father and conscientiously strive to improve our communication with Him is my earnest plea, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President Marion G. Romney

President Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the General Priesthood Meeting which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 7:00 P.M.

The Sunday Morning Session will be broadcast by many radio and television stations in the Western United States and Canada, and by way of oceanic cable to members assembled in 102 chapels in England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, and Austria.

KSL Radio and KIRO Radio in Seattle will rebroadcast sessions over extensive distances, beginning at midnight following each conference day's proceedings.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir Broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.