

All scriptures are one in that they testify of Jesus. Jacob, a Book of Mormon prophet, reminds us that "none of the prophets have written, nor prophesied, save they have spoken concerning this Christ" (Jacob 7:11). Speaking of the scriptures, the Psalmist said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

The Book of Mormon will encourage only righteousness. Why, then, has hostility been engendered against the book? In part, no doubt, it may have come because the origin of the book was from golden plates delivered to Joseph Smith by an angel. These were seen and handled by selected witnesses, but not put on public display. Perhaps it is also because it is claimed primarily to be the work of ancient prophets here on the American continent.

### Testimony as special witness

The great worth of the Book of Mormon was declared by the Savior himself. He said in 3 Nephi, "This is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me" (3 Nephi 11:32).

The Redeemer further declared in the Book of Mormon, "Behold I have given unto you my gospel" (3 Nephi 27:13). As a special witness, I testify that Jesus is the Christ and that Nephi's and Isaiah's prophecies of His coming have in fact been fulfilled. Like Nephi, "We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ" (2 Nephi 25:26).

I testify that the Savior will come again, and that at his second coming some will say, "What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet?" He will

show the wounds in His hands, wrists, and feet, and they will ask when and where he received these wounds. He will answer: "I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God" (D&C 45:51-52).

I testify through the sure conviction that springs from the witness of the Spirit that it is possible to know things that have been revealed with greater certainty than by actually seeing them. We can have a more absolute knowledge than eyes can perceive or ears can hear. God himself has put his approval on the Book of Mormon, having said, "As your Lord and your God liveth it is true" (D&C 17:6).

I can now see more clearly through the eyes of my own understanding what my mother could see in her precious old worn-out copy of the Book of Mormon. I pray that we may live in such a way as to merit and gain a testimony of and abide by the great truths of the Book of Mormon. I testify that the keystone of our religion is solidly in place, bearing the weight of truth as it moves through all the earth, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "High on the Mountain Top," following which we shall hear from Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

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The Choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

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### Elder L. Tom Perry

One of the special opportunities we have as General Authorities is to visit the stakes of Zion. Thirty to forty times each year we find ourselves stay-

ing in the home of a different stake president. We have the privilege of being guests in the greatest homes you will find in all the world.

### Strength in family unit

Let me tell you about one of my recent experiences. I was assigned to a stake conference to release the stake president, who had served for many, many years. It was a difficult stake to administer. The stake had been losing population. It was located near one of our major city centers. Industry had moved in. With the growth of industry, many of the members had moved out to the more suburban areas. Because of his assignment, he had stayed in the area to shepherd the flock. He had not found it to be a hopeless situation. Through his energy, effort, and great enthusiasm, the stake started to grow once again.

As the weekend progressed, his children came by auto and air, returning home to pay tribute to their father for his years of faithful service. I found a special spirit in this home. They were a very close family. How they enjoyed being together!

As I stood to address the conference in its final session, there seated to my left sat his entire family, tears streaming down their faces as they honored their father on this grand occasion.

Following the conference session, I had been invited to stay for family dinner before leaving for the airport to fly home. As the family gathered around the table, the father requested that we kneel in family prayer. Kneeling in prayer, I discovered their strength. This family understood their relationship to God, their Eternal Father. They understood their relationship to their earthly father and mother, to their brothers and sisters. The brotherhood and sisterhood existing in this family unit made it easy for them to stretch beyond their borders to friends and neighbors.

### Duty and privilege to teach prayer

Being a guest in so many different homes over the last few years has certainly convinced me that a special spirit is clearly evident when a family prays together.

Our prophets have admonished us repeatedly to make family prayer a regular part of our daily worship. President John Taylor asked the Saints:

"Do you have 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" (*Journal of Discourses*, 21:118).

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* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1941], p. 26).

It is clearly our duty and privilege as parents to teach our children to pray, and regular family prayer sets the pattern.

### Divine fellowship with God

Prayer is a divine fellowship with God. Such spiritual companionship brings a matchless blessing. I believe families who pray together understand the meaning and comfort the Savior was trying to give to His believers, as He offered His inspiring prayer as His earthly ministry was coming to an end.

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. . . .

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:15-18, 20-21).

### Draw near to our Father

President Heber J. Grant once counseled us:

"The minute a man stops supplicating God for his spirit and direction, just so soon he starts out to become a stranger to him and his works. When men stop praying for God's spirit, they place confidence in their own unaided reason, and they gradually lose the spirit of God, just the same as near and dear friends, by never writing to or visiting with each other, will become strangers" (*Improvement Era*, Aug. 1944, p. 481).

Prayer endows us with the power to draw near to our Eternal Father. How important it is, then, that one of our fundamental teachings to our children is how to pray.

### How to address the Lord

Could I encourage you to consider the subject of prayer in your discussions as you hold family home evenings? Could I direct your teaching of prayer to at least four main areas of emphasis?

First, the way we address our Father in Heaven in prayer. I listen to so many people offering prayers, and I wonder who they are addressing. The salutation is so complicated I find it difficult to comprehend the being to which the prayer is being directed. I am reminded of the occasion when the first Congress was trying to determine how to address the president of our country. The suggestion was given that he could be called "His Highness, President of the United States and Protector of the Liberties of the Same." Washington's request was to just call him Mr. Presi-

dent. (Willis M. and Ruth West, *The American People* [Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1948].)

When the Lord instructed His disciples on how to pray, He said:

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. . . .

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:5, 9).

In the words of other prayers given to us by the Savior, the term *Father* is also used. "O God, the Eternal Father" is the way the Lord instructed us to bless the sacrament. (See D&C 20:77.) By use of the word *Father*, we understand our relationship to Him. He is our Eternal Father, and we are His children. Teach your children how to address the Lord in prayer.

### Language of prayer

Second, use the sacred language of prayer. We should always address Diety by using the sacred pronouns *thou*, *thee*, *thy*, and *thine*. The late President Stephen L. Richards gave us this wise counsel:

"We have discovered . . . a lack of proper teaching with reference to prayer. I know that I myself have been shocked out in the mission field as I have heard missionaries called on for prayer who seem to have had no experience or training whatever in the use of the language of prayer. . . .

"I think, my brethren, that in the quorums and in the classes, you would do well, as in the homes also, to teach the language of prayer—"Thee and Thou," rather than 'you.' It always seems disappointing to me to have our Father in Heaven, our Lord, addressed as 'you.' It is surprising how much we see of this. . . . I think you might make note of it, and avail yourselves of any opportunities that may come in order to

teach the sacred and reverential language of prayer" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1951, p. 175).

Let us teach our children to use the language of prayer.

### Gratitude to the Lord

Third, offer prayers of gratitude. I was requested to bless a lad who was having problems in his young life a few weeks ago. After the blessing, as I prepared to leave, his mother said to him, "Son, thank him for the blessing before he leaves." Instead of turning to me, he lowered his head, folded his arms, and thanked his Father in Heaven. How perceptive children are!

As I have opportunity of kneeling each night and morning with my wife in prayer, I am full of gratitude for the blessing and privilege of having her companionship. I am full of gratitude for the blessings that come to me through my children and their lives as I am able to be with them and watch their growth and progress.

When you are on your knees in prayer, there is an overwhelming feeling of gratitude to the Lord for the many blessings that he bestows on his children.

How blessed we are for our understanding of who He is. How blessed we are as a people for the gift of the gospel. I marvel at what He has created for our use and benefit and for the privilege of enjoying this earthly experience. My heart is especially filled with gratitude at this season of the harvest when I go out to dig a hill of potatoes and there find manyfold over the small piece I planted a few months before, or pull off an ear of corn and see how those two or three kernels placed in the earth now yield a hundredfold. As I travel and see the beauty of His creations—the mountains, the fertile plains, the sparkling streams, or the mighty oceans—how grateful I am for His blessings to me. When we kneel in family prayer, let us teach our children to express gratitude unto the Lord for His many blessings to us.

### What to pray for

Fourth, our petitions unto the Lord. The Prophet Joseph Smith at one time stated:

"We would say to the brethren, seek to know God in your closets, call upon him in the fields. Follow the direction 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" (*History of the Church*, 5:31).

President Brigham Young once counseled us:

"Again, suppose a family wish to assemble for prayer, what would be orderly and proper? For the head of the family to call together his wife . . . and children, . . . and when he prays aloud, all present, who are old enough to understand, should mentally repeat the words as they fall from his lips; and why so? That all may be one.

"If the people will ask in faith, they will receive, and let all mentally ask precisely as does the one who is spokesman. Let all leave the cares of their work behind them; let the kitchens take care of themselves, and let the barns, the flocks and herds take care of themselves, and if they are destroyed while you are praying, be able to freely say, 'Go, they are the Lord's; He gave them to me, and I will worship Him; I will assemble my family and call upon the name of my God.'

"By leaving business and the cares thereof where they belong, and attending strictly to worship in its season, if not at first, you soon will be united, and be able to bring every evil principle into subjection. If all are bound up in this manner, don't you see that it will make a mighty cord of faith?" (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:53).

Let us teach our children to pray for courage, for opportunity, for comfort, for peace, for understanding, and not for material gifts. Let us teach them

to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

### Time for prayer

President Kimball has counseled us: "There will *always* be time for prayer. There will *always* be the moments of blessed solitude, of closeness to the Heavenly Father, of freedom from worldly things and cares.

"When we kneel in family prayer, our children at our side on their knees are learning habits that will stay with them all through their lives. If we do not take time for prayers, what we are actually saying to our children is, 'Well, it isn't very important, anyway. We won't worry about it. If we can do it conveniently, we will have our prayer, but if the school bell rings and the bus is coming and employment is calling—well, prayer isn't very important and we will do it when it is convenient.' Unless planned for, it never seems to be convenient. On the other hand, what a joyous thing it is to establish such customs and habits in the home that when parents visit their children in the latter's homes after they are married they just naturally kneel with them in the usual, established manner of prayer!" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], p. 253).

### Teaching prayer by example

I am grateful for my children, who are teaching my grandchildren the blessings of prayer. I believe the first

word I heard from Terry, Esther, Audrey, and Thomas's lips has been *Amen*, oftentimes repeated with great gusto and enthusiasm. This has been followed by *Father in Heaven*. The beginning of their parents' earthly instruction has been to teach them who they are and how they can communicate with their Eternal Father. I am certain the same practice will be followed for Benjamin, Michael, and Justin, just as they are old enough to also learn how to approach their Father in Heaven in prayer.

I can think of no greater teaching to our children than that of the power of prayer. We should do it by example, and take our children daily before the Lord and give them the peace and assurance that can come from knowing they are a child of our Father in Heaven.

May we, this day, commit ourselves to so live that we will go before the Lord with a clear conscience and ask for His divine guidance and assistance and express our gratitude unto Him for the blessings He has given to us.

May the power of prayer bless our homes, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now speak to us.

## Elder Carlos E. Asay

### Parent-child interviews

Several years ago, I approached one of my daughters and said, "My dear, it's time for an interview." Her

response was less than enthusiastic, and I determined within my own mind that I was boring her terribly. So instead of subjecting her to a formal conversation, I invited her into the car and drove to the Dairy Queen where we