



The Importance of the Temple for Living Members

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Not long ago I filled a stake conference assignment in an area outside the United States where one of the temples is located. My travel itinerary allowed me to arrive at the conference location an hour or two before the conference meetings began. I had spent several hours at airports and on airplanes, caught up in the tension and frustrations that so often accompany international travel. Since there was adequate time following my arrival and before the conference meetings were to begin, I asked the local priesthood leaders if we could make a brief visit to the temple.

The weather was deteriorating, and before we reached the temple, a cold, drizzling rain had begun to fall. The conditions failed to lift from me the mood that had been set in the bustling, worldly atmosphere of the airport and the clearances through customs and immigration. We hurried from the parking lot at the temple to avoid becoming drenched by the rain. Immediately upon our entering the doors of the temple, the atmosphere changed. I sensed a spirit of warmth and peace. The countenances of the temple patrons were a marked contrast to those of the harried travelers whom I had left a

short time before at the airport. In a very real sense, it seemed as though we had walked through the temple doors into a different world. I found myself smiling at the people in the foyer area. My spirits were lifted, and the concerns of the outside world melted away. I thought on this occasion, as I have often done upon entering the temple, of the words spoken by Joseph Smith in the dedicatory prayer offered at the Kirtland Temple in March 1836, when he asked of the Lord: "That thy glory may rest down upon thy people, and upon this thy house, ... that it may be sanctified and consecrated to be holy, and that thy holy presence may be continually in this house;

"And that all people who shall enter upon the threshold of the Lord's house may feel thy power, and feel constrained to acknowledge that thou hast sanctified it, and that it is thy house, a place of thy holiness." (D&C 109:12–13.) So often we relate the temples to the vicarious ordinances that are performed there for those who are deceased.

Certainly this is a vital part of temple work. But there is another aspect of temple activity that has great importance for living members. I refer not only to the ordinances performed for the living but as well to the spiritually uplifting, strengthening influence in individual lives that results from regular temple attendance.

Spiritual reinforcement

In a world that is ripening in iniquity (see D&C 18:6), members of the Church face the challenge of sustaining a pattern of obedience to gospel principles that will result

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in their being increasingly different from the general behavioral trends of the world.

This will require all of the spiritual reinforcement that can be drawn upon. Prayer, scripture study, participation in worship services, and the giving of service will become increasingly essential. The influence of the temple will be important as a part of this spiritual undergirding.

Joseph Smith made reference to the spiritual strength that can come from temple activity when he included this appeal to the Lord in the prayer of dedication at the Kirtland Temple: "And we ask thee, Holy Father, that thy servants may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them, and thy glory be round about them, and thine angels have charge over them. ...

"We ask thee, Holy Father, to establish the people that shall worship, and honorably hold a name and standing in this thy house, to all generations and for eternity."

Qualify for the blessings

Our qualifying for the blessings sought by the Prophet in his prayer will be a vital factor in the spiritual nurturing that is requisite to the time in which we live.

President Ezra Taft Benson has affirmed: "Many parents, in and out of the Church, are concerned about protection against a cascading avalanche of wickedness which threatens to engulf [the world]. ... There is a power associated with ordinances of heaven—even the power of godliness—which can and will thwart the forces of evil if we will but be worthy of those sacred [covenants made in the temple of the Lord]. ... Our families will be protected, our children will be safeguarded as we live the gospel, visit the temple, and live close to the Lord." (Atlanta Georgia Temple Cornerstone Laying, 1 June 1983.)

Elder Boyd K. Packer has said, "Our labors in the temple cover us with a shield and a protection, both individually and as a people." (Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980, p. 265.) He has also added: "The Lord will bless us as we attend to the sacred ordinance work of the temples.



Consider Activity

Blessings there will not be limited to our temple service. We will be blessed in all of our affairs. We will be eligible to have the Lord take an interest in our affairs both spiritual and temporal." (Ibid., p. 182.)

In an address to the regional representatives of the Church on 6 April 1984, President Gordon B. Hinckley said, "I am satisfied that if our people would attend the temple more, there would be less of selfishness in their lives. There would be less of absence of love in their relationships. There would be more of fidelity on the part of husbands and wives. There would be more of love and peace and happiness in the homes of our people." (Regional Representatives' Seminar, 6 Apr. 1984.)

These are remarkable promises made by the Lord's chosen servants to his people. Those who attend the temple regularly can attest to their validity. There is a definite connection between qualifying for the protecting and preserving powers of the Lord and regular temple attendance. The reverse is also true. When one does not go to the temple regularly, he is more susceptible to the world's influence.