

## Family History

Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple*, Bookcraft, said, "There somehow seems to be the feeling that genealogical work is an all-or-nothing responsibility.

That is not so.

Family History work is another responsibility for every Latter-day Saint.

And we may do it successfully along with all the other responsibilities that rest upon us.

The bishop can do it without neglecting his flock.

A stake missionary can do it without abandoning his mission.

A Sunday School teacher can accomplish it without forgetting his lesson.

A ward Relief Society president can do it without forsaking the sisters in the ward.

You can fulfill your obligation to your kindred dead and to the Lord without forsaking your other responsibilities.

You can do this work.

You can do it without becoming a so-called 'expert' in it.  
But the decision, the action, must begin with the individual.

The Lord will not tamper with our agency.

If we want a testimony of genealogical and temple work,  
we must do something about that work."

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### **FAMILY HISTORY BASICS** BY PRESIDENT BOYD K. PACKER Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

There are several basic component parts to family history and temple work. Over the years, they may be rearranged somewhat in emphasis, or the approach in programming Church participation may change somewhat. But the responsibilities stay about the same.

1. Each of us is to compile his or her own life history.
2. As individuals and families we are each to seek out our kindred dead, beginning first with the four most recent generations on each line, and then going back as far as we can.
3. We should place our records into a Book of Remembrance.
4. We are each to participate in other programs such as name extraction when asked.
5. We are to organize our families and hold meetings and reunions.
6. If we have access to a temple, each of us should go to the temple as often as possible to do ordinance work — first for ourselves, then for our progenitors, then for all the names that have been gathered by means other than our own.

A Book Of Remembrance "Adam harkened unto the voice of God...  
And a book of remembrance was kept." Moses 6:1,5

"It may be considered by some not important to write or keep a record of our work or the work of God, but I believe it is. Otherwise the prophets would not have been moved upon to exhort us to faithfulness in this subject. The Lord has told us what is not sealed or recorded on earth is not sealed or recorded in heaven. It appears to be very important that we do keep a true and faithful record in all things. Every man should write a brief history of his life, his parentage, his birth, his religion, when he was baptized and by whom, give a brief sketch of all his missions and of all his official acts and the dealings of God with him. Get all of your blessings written and preserve them. Make a record of every official act of your life. If every man will do this, the Church can write a correct account of it." Journal of Wilford Woodruff, 1862.

The work of gathering and sharing eternal family records is a personal responsibility. It cannot be passed off or given to another. Elder Dennis Neuenschwander April 1999 Conference

The First Stone in our Family Altar - a Family Record. When a child reaches maturity and makes another household, one of the first things that the young couple should take along should be the records of their families to be extended by them as life goes on.

A life that is not documented is a life that within a generation or two will largely be lost to memory. What a tragedy this can be in the history of a family. Knowledge of our ancestors shapes and instills within us values that give direction and meaning to our lives. That which I do not in some way records will be lost at my death, and that which I do not pass on to my posterity, they will never have.

Start by writing your full name, birth date and place. Then write the name of your parents and their birth, marriage and death dates and places. Next write what you can about their parents and so on. Write the same information about the children of each family and their spouses and children. This is the outline known as your family tree.

The thing which will give it identity will be to place the family members into their place in history. Try to gather faith-promoting, character-building experiences of your ancestors. Contact living relatives, especially older family members. Compile their stories along with the family tree of names. Look for each person's unique qualities. Seek details about the time in which they lived, their struggles, courage, and life altering decisions. Keep the record simple so that even young children will be interested in their family. Share the stories often.

A scrapbook contains photographs and documents but the family's history is told in words and these graphics should be used to illustrate the text. Once you begin you will find some inspiring things will happen and you will find help in all the facets of your life.