

For Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The Belief:

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints do family history research because they are motivated by love for their family members, living and deceased. We believe that families can be united in the most sacred of all human relationships - as husband and wife and as parents and children - in a way that cannot be limited by death. We believe that through priesthood authority from God, marriages can be binding on earth and through all eternity. We identify our ancestors to ensure that the essential ordinances are performed in their behalf in sacred temples. To share these blessings with our deceased ancestors, we also perform marriages and sealings by proxy in their behalf. Ancestors for whom the ordinances are performed are free to choose whether they accept these ordinances. We believe that Eternal life will be given to all who accept the teachings of Jesus Christ, obey His commandments, and receive the necessary ordinances through the priesthood.

While Jesus' body lay in the tomb after His Crucifixion, His spirit went to the spirit world, where He preached the gospel to the spirits of the just (1 Peter 3:18-20, 4:6). "From among the righteous, he commissioned messengers to carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men; and thus was the gospel preached to the dead" (D&C 138:30). The people in the spirit world may exercise faith in Jesus Christ and accept the gospel message, but because they do not have physical bodies, gospel ordinances must be performed vicariously for them on earth. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have a responsibility to provide these ordinances for their own ancestral families. Ordinances performed for the dead are effective when the deceased persons choose to accept them and become qualified to receive them (D&C 138:19,32-34).

The Prophet Elijah restored the priesthood keys of the sealing power to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple in 1836 (see D&C 110:13-16). Through this power, sealing ordinances can be performed that make it possible for families to be united eternally. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints should identify their kindred dead, request temple ordinances if needed, and provide these ordinances by proxy if possible.

"It matters not what else we have been called to do, or what position we may occupy, or how faithfully in other ways we have labored in the Church, no one is exempt from this great obligation. It is required of the apostle as well as of the humblest elder. Place or distinction, or long service in the Church, will not entitle one to disregard the salvation of one's dead. If we neglect the weightier privilege and commandment, notwithstanding all other good works, we shall find ourselves under severe condemnation." (Joseph Fielding Smith)

A Command:

"Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. *And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming*". (Joseph Smith - History 1: 38-39, Doctrine & Covenants 2:1-3)

"And again, Let all the records be had in order, that they may be put in the archives of my Holy Temple, to be held in remembrance from generation to generation, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Doctrine & Covenants 127:9) "And all they who are not found written in the book of remembrance shall find none inheritance in that day, but they shall be cut asunder, and their portion shall be appointed them among unbelievers, where are wailing and gnashing of teeth." (D&C 85:9) "... Let us, therefore, as a Church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present in his holy temple, when it is finished, a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptation." (Doctrine & Covenants 128:24)

What is a record "worthy of all acceptation" referred to in Doctrine & Covenants 128:24?

1. Complete names
 2. Complete dates
 3. Complete places
 4. Relationship data
 5. A Legacy of well-documented Sources
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Keep Balance In Our Lives:

To provide spiritual and temporal balance in one's life requires scheduling and well-developed habits. There will always be challenges, interruptions and unexpected changes in one's life, so if our day does not go as planned, it is okay, we can work at it again tomorrow. To accomplish our Family History Work we must schedule and work at it all of our lives! Adhering to the principles of the gospel and the commandments of God gives us balance. Life is put into perspective when we do so, and when life's many dimensions are kept in perspective our lives will be more purposeful and productive. *And see that all these things are done in wisdom and in order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength. ... it is expedient that he should be diligent, ... therefore, all things must be done in order.* (Mosiah 4:27)

Important Counsel:

"MEMBERS SHOULD BE DILIGENT IN ASSURING THE ACCURACY OF ALL INFORMATION SUBMITTED [FOR ORDINANCE WORK]." Letter signed by The First Presidency. (*Ensign*, Sept. 1995, 80)

(Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* Vol.2 pgs. 207-209, 1955) "Researchers will make fewer mistakes and in the end save time and means by giving **more attention to their recording**. It is the disposition of many people to hurry their work in an unorganized fashion because of their zeal for temple work. **Patience, accompanied by prayer and thorough research, will prove best in the end.**

The Kingdom of God is a house of order because all things therein obey the law. Temple work should not be done in a haphazard or disorderly way. Those who labor for the dead should endeavor to prepare their records in an orderly and systematic manner.

Let each family do the work for their own kindred, as they may have the right, and if they do work for others, it must be at the instance and with the consent of the living relatives who are immediately concerned. No person has a right to select names for other than their own family and go to the temple to perform the work for them. This cannot be tolerated, for it would lead to confusion and duplication of work.

Some of us get so enthusiastic over this temple work that we are not willing to abide by the rules and the regulations to confine ourselves to our own line, but we want to spread out into the other fellow's line, and we want to do the work because we readily find names that belong to somebody else, and that method of work for the dead is not permissible. It is all right to help others do their work, if we do that with proper consent, but each family group is entitled to do the work for its particular line.

When names are copied in an improper way and incomplete records are sent to the temples, but one thing will be the result--confusion. The compilers of records should try to find the information so that records can be made in family groups with all the necessary data for correct identification. **When names are taken out of books without any accompanying information that will identify them, or show relationship to parents and other members of the family, little, if any, good can follow.**

If work in the temples is done with records that are incomplete and inaccurate it will more than likely have to be done over again. In this way the records are burdened with unnecessary matter which cannot be properly arranged".

Joseph F. Smith in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, pages 309-310 says, " If I have done you any wrong; if I have robbed you of any right; if I have not been true to my promise with you; or if I have done anything that has in any measure debased me in the sight of God or my brethren, I ought to go and try to make reparation before I attempt to go into the house of God... . That is the principle upon which I should do right, make recompense and settle difficulties. I have heard of brethren associated together in family ties, as well as in the bonds of the new and everlasting covenant, who are at variance with each other, with bitter feelings existing in their hearts, one toward the other, and neither will humble himself to go to the other and acknowledge his faults, or to try to bring about a reconciliation, each one magnifying the weaknesses of his neighbor, and at the same time unmindful of his own faults and weakness. Yet ... if they were denied the privilege of going into the house of God, they would feel that a great wrong had been done them.

But let me ask you, Are such men worthy to go there? Is a man that has bitterness in his heart towards his neighbor and will not forgive him nor seek reconciliation, worthy to go into the house of God? And yet you cannot deny him. There will be hundreds go there in this condition, in spite of all that we can do or say. Can they expect God will be present with them, and that His glory will shine upon them? Do not deceive yourselves. When we are worthy, God will manifest Himself unto us. But this will be when we are worthy, and not until then."
