

Liahona

SINGAPORE

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

“Go Ye Unto Your Homes”

(3 Nephi 17:3)

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Over the past year, I have been assigned to stake and district conferences in many countries across the Asia Area. In each nation, rich and poor, Church members want to know how to find joy in family life.

President Gordon B. Hinckley proclaimed: “The Church is a constant in a world of change. It is an anchor in a world of shifting values. It emphasizes the importance of the family, and all of us have to know that family life is unraveling across the world. We are holding on to the family. We are trying to strengthen the family. We teach family ideals. We have a great program for the development of family solidarity that is satisfying a human need and offers hope to many, many people who are desperately looking for something as fathers and mothers, as they see their children moving in the direction of drugs and other things. Divorce is rampant across the world, and growing. There is need for stability. The family is the basic organization of society. A

nation can be no stronger than the strength of its families.”¹

Modern Apostles and prophets – following the pattern established by Jesus Christ when he visited the Nephites as recounted in the Book of Mormon – have clearly and consistently taught four keys to strengthening the family and enjoying peace and joy in this life. My wife and I have sought to be obedient to this counsel of the prophets in raising our six children, and we have been richly blessed.

1. Family prayer daily. Jesus Christ commanded the Nephites, “Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed” (3 Nephi 18:21).

Our current prophet, President Thomas S. Monson has stated: “Family prayer is the greatest deterrent to sin, and hence the most beneficent provider of joy and happiness. The old saying is yet true: “The family that prays together stays together.”²

Our children were taught to pray as soon as they could speak. Beginning at age one living at home and continuing now to age 25 when visiting home, each has taken their turn offering prayers over our meals and in the morning and evening. Our children have come to love one another by praying often for each another (see Mosiah 4:14-15; D&C 68:28).

2. Sabbath observance weekly. The Savior taught the Nephites to “meet together oft” and partake of the Sacrament “that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always

remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you” (3 Nephi 18:11, 22).

President Hinckley taught: “If you have any doubt about the wisdom, the divinity of observing the Sabbath day, stay away from the stores on Sunday, stay away from the markets, stay home and gather your family about you. Teach them the gospel, enjoy yourselves together on the Sabbath day, come to your meetings, participate. You will know that the principle of the Sabbath is a true principle which brings with it great blessings.”³

Our family has tried to make Sunday a special day. We arrive at Church early so we can be prepared to feel the Spirit, and we take our scriptures so we can participate in the lessons. We avoid doing the activities we do on other days. This day of rest has brought our family closer together, just as the scriptures and modern prophets have promised (see Isaiah 58:13-14; D&C 59:9-14).

3. Family home evening weekly. The resurrected Lord said to the Nephites: “I perceive that ye are weak, that ye cannot understand all my words which I am commanded of the Father to speak unto you at this time. Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand” (3 Nephi 17:2-3).

President Monson has instructed us that: “The family is the ideal place for teaching. It is also a laboratory for learning. Family home evening can bring spiritual growth to each member. ‘The home is the basis of a righteous life, and no other instrumentality can take its place or fulfill its essential functions.’ ... It is in the home where fathers and mothers can teach provident living to their children. Sharing of tasks and helping one another set a pattern for future families as children grow, marry, and leave home. The lessons learned in the home are those that last the longest.”⁴

Our family looks forward to and enjoys family home evening. We open and close with prayer, plan our schedule for the week, participate in a brief spiritual lesson, sing many hymns, then play a game or do some other fun activity. Obedience to this prophetic counsel has filled our home with love and testimony.

4. Scripture reading daily. Jesus Christ

commanded the Nephites to “search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah. ... Search the prophets, for many there be that testify of these things” (3 Nephi 23:1, 5).

President Ezra Taft Benson promised great blessings to those parents who exercise the faith to read scriptures as a family when he said: “I bless you with increased understanding of the Book of Mormon. I promise you that from this moment forward, if we will daily sup from its pages and abide by its precepts, God will pour out upon each child of Zion and the Church a blessing hitherto unknown.”⁵

Sister Perkins and I were young parents of a three-year old boy and a one-year old daughter when we heard President Benson make this promise. For the past 22 years we have done our best to read the scriptures daily with our six children. The time for scripture reading has changed according to circumstances – in the evening when the children were small, in the early morning when they grew and had more activities. When small, the children only repeated the words but by age six they were reading from the Book of Mormon. As teenagers, they asked profound questions that prompted family discussion. Together, my wife and I testify that the Lord richly blesses families for reading daily, whether for as short as five minutes or as long as 30 minutes.

I am deeply grateful for modern prophets who have clearly taught us the way to find joy in family life. I pray that the Saints in the Asia Area may heed this counsel and receive the blessings our Heavenly Father bestows upon His children who follow the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. ■

Notes

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley,” Ensign, Aug. 1996, 60–61.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Hallmarks of a Happy Home,” Ensign, Oct. 2001, 2–8.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley,” Ensign, Aug. 1996, 60–61.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “Your Personal Influence,” Ensign, May 2004, 20.
5. Ezra Taft Benson, “A Sacred Responsibility,” Ensign, May 1986, 77.