

Temple Worship: The Source of Strength and Power in Times of Need

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Each member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is blessed to live in a time when the Lord has inspired His prophets to provide significantly increased accessibility to the holy temples. With careful planning and some sacrifice, the majority of the members of the Church can receive the ordinances of the temple for themselves and for their ancestors and be blessed by the covenants made therein.

Because I love you, I am going to speak to you heart to heart, without mincing words. I have seen that many times individuals have made great sacrifices to go to a distant temple. But when a temple is built close by, within a short time, many do not visit it regularly. I have a suggestion: When a temple is conveniently nearby, small things may interrupt your plans to go to the temple. Set specific goals, considering your circumstances, of when you can and will participate in temple ordinances. Then do not allow anything to interfere with that plan. This pattern will guarantee that those who live in the shadow of a temple will be as blessed as are those who plan far ahead and make a long trip to the temple.

Fourteen years ago I decided to attend the temple and complete an ordinance at least once a week. When I am traveling I make up the missed visits in order to achieve that objective. I have kept that resolve, and it has changed my life profoundly. I strive to participate in all the different ordinances available in the temple.

I encourage you to establish your own goal of how frequently you will avail yourself of the ordinances offered in our

operating temples. What is there that is more important than attending and participating in the ordinances of the temple? What activity could have a greater impact and provide more joy and profound happiness for a couple than worshipping together in the temple?

Now I share some additional suggestions of how to gain more benefit from temple attendance.

- Understand the doctrine related to temple ordinances, especially the significance of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.¹
- While participating in temple ordinances, consider your relationship to Jesus Christ and His relationship to our Heavenly Father. This simple act will lead to greater understanding of the supernal nature of the temple ordinances.
- Always prayerfully express gratitude for the incomparable blessings that flow from temple ordinances. Live each day so as to give evidence to Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son of how very much those blessings mean to you.
- Schedule regular visits to the temple.
- Leave sufficient time to be unhurried within the temple walls. Rotate activities so that you can participate in all of the ordinances of the temple.
- Remove your watch when you enter a house of the Lord.
- Listen carefully to the presentation of each element

of the ordinance with an open mind and heart.

- Be mindful of the individual for whom you are performing the vicarious ordinance. At times pray that he or she will recognize the vital importance of the ordinances and be worthy or prepare to be worthy to benefit from them.

- Recognize that much of the majesty of the sealing ordinance cannot be understood and remembered with one live experience. Substantial subsequent vicarious work permits one to understand much more of what is communicated in the live ordinances.

- Realize that a sealing ordinance is not enduring until after it is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. Both individuals must be worthy and want the sealing to be eternal.

If as a couple you have not yet been sealed in the temple, consider this scripture:

“In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;

“And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];

“And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.

“He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase” (D&C 131:1-4).

Sometimes when I hear a choir during a temple dedicatory service, I experience a feeling so sublime that it elevates my heart and mind. I close my eyes, and more than once, in my mind, I have seen an inverted cone of individuals beginning at the temple and rising upward. I have felt that they represent many spirits waiting for the vicarious work to be done for them in that sanctuary, rejoicing because finally there is a place that can free them from the chains that hold them back in their eternal progress. In order to achieve this end, you will need to do the vicarious work. You will need to identify your ancestors. The new FamilySearch™ program makes the effort easier than before. It is necessary to identify those ancestors, qualify them, and come to the house of the Lord to perform the ordinances they are longing to receive. What a joy it is to be able to participate in the work of a temple!

I would like to relate the experience of an ancestor of my wife, Jeanene. Her name is Sarah DeArmon Pea Rich. Her commentary shows the impact that the temple can have in our lives. When she was 31 years old, she received a calling from Brigham Young to work in the Nauvoo Temple, where all the ordinances possible were performed before the Saints had to abandon that temple. This is what she wrote:

“Many were the blessings we had received in the house of the Lord, which has caused us joy and comfort in the midst of all our sorrows and enabled us to have faith in God, knowing He would guide us and sustain us in the unknown journey that lay before us. For if it had not been for the faith and knowledge that was bestowed upon us in that temple by the

influence and help of the Spirit of the Lord, our journey would have been like one taking a leap in the dark. To start out on such a journey in the winter as it were and in our state of poverty, it would seem like walking into the jaws of death. But we had faith in our Heavenly Father, and we put our trust in Him feeling that we were His chosen people and had embraced His gospel, and instead of sorrow, we felt to rejoice that the day of our deliverance had come.”²

Now I would like to speak of the special meaning the temple has for me. Part of this message is going to be sensitive, so I will appreciate your prayers as I give it so that I do not become too emotional.

Fourteen years ago the Lord took my wife beyond the veil. I love her with all my heart, but I have never complained because I know it was His will. I have never asked why but rather what is it that He wants me to learn from this experience. I believe that is a good way to face the unpleasant things in our lives, not complaining but thanking the Lord for the trust He places in us when He gives us the opportunity to overcome difficulties.

We had the blessing of having children. A daughter, the first child, continues to be an enormous blessing in our lives. A couple of years later a son we named Richard was born. A few years later a daughter was born. She died after living only a few minutes.

Our son, Richard, was born with a heart defect. We were told that unless that could be cured, there was little probability that he would live more than two or three years. This was so long ago that techniques now used to repair such

defects were unknown. We had the blessing of having a place where doctors agreed to attempt to perform the needed surgery. The surgery had to be done while his little heart was beating.

The surgery was performed just six weeks after the birth and death of our baby daughter. When the operation finished, the principal surgeon came in and said it was a success. And we thought, “How wonderful! Our son will have a strong body, be able to run and walk and grow!” We expressed deep gratitude to the Lord. Then about 10 minutes later, the same doctor came in with an ashen face and told us, “Your son has died.” Apparently the shock of the operation was more than his little body could endure.

Later, during the night, I embraced my wife and said to her, “We do not need to worry, because our children were born in the covenant. We have the assurance that we will have them with us in the future. Now we have a reason to live extremely well. We have a son and a daughter who have qualified to go to the celestial kingdom because they died before the age of eight.” That knowledge has given us great comfort. We rejoice in the knowledge that all seven of our children are sealed to us for time and all eternity.

That trial has not been a problem for either of us because, when we live righteously and have received the ordinances of the temple, everything else is in the hands of the Lord. We can do the best we can, but the final outcome is up to Him. We should never complain, when we are living worthily, about what happens in our lives.

Fourteen years ago the Lord decided it was not necessary for my wife to live any longer on the earth, and He took her to the other side of the veil. I confess that there are times when it is difficult not to be able to turn and talk to her, but I do not complain. The Lord has allowed me, at important moments in my life, to feel her influence through the veil.

What I am trying to teach is that when we keep the temple covenants we have made and when we live righteously in order to maintain the blessings promised by those ordinances, then come what may, we have no reason to worry or to feel despondent.

I know that I will have the privilege of being with that beautiful wife, whom I love with all my heart, and with those children who are with her on the other side of the veil because of the ordinances that are performed in the temple. What a blessing to have once again on the earth the sealing authority,

not only for this mortal life but for the eternities. I am grateful that the Lord has restored His gospel in its fulness, including the ordinances that are required for us to be happy in the world and to live everlastingly happy lives in the hereafter.

This is the work of the Lord. Jesus Christ lives. This is His Church. I am a witness of Him and of His Atonement, which is the foundation that makes effective and lasting every ordinance performed in the temples. I so testify with every capacity I possess in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Sections 88, 109, 131, and 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants would be a good place to begin.
2. Sarah DeArmon Pea Rich, "Autobiography, 1885-93," Church History Library, 66; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization standardized.