

Church Handbook
of Instructions

Book 2

Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders

Section 8

Spiritual and
Temporal Welfare

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Introduction

The Lord admonished, "Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence" (D&C 107:99).

Church leaders should seek personal revelation to help them learn and fulfill the duties of their callings.

Studying the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets will also help leaders learn their duties. As leaders treasure up the words of God, the Spirit will guide them in what to do and say (see D&C 84:85).

Leaders also learn their duties by studying the instructions in Church handbooks. These instructions can facilitate revelation if they are used to provide an understanding of principles, policies, and procedures to apply when seeking the guidance of the Spirit.

Introduction to the *Church Handbook of Instructions*

To reduce and simplify information on Church administration, most handbooks and other instructions have been consolidated into the *Church Handbook of Instructions*, which consists of two books:

- *Book 1: Stake Presidencies and Bishoprics*
- *Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders*

This publication of the "Spiritual and Temporal Welfare" section is a duplicate of the section in *Book 2*. It is published for leaders who do not need the entire book. Although the information in *Providing in the Lord's Way: A Leader's Guide to Welfare* is included in this section and in other sections of the *Church Handbook of Instructions*, it will continue to be published as a separate document.

Distribution of This Section

- High councilors (6)
- Assistants in the high priests group leadership (2)
- Counselors in the elders quorum presidency (2)
- Counselors in the ward Relief Society presidency (2)
- Relief Society homemaking lesson teacher (1)

If leaders who receive the "Spiritual and Temporal Welfare" section need access to other sections of *Book 2*, the stake presidency, high priests group leader, elders quorum president, or ward Relief Society president could make their copies of the book available temporarily.

8. Spiritual and Temporal Welfare (Perfect the Saints)

Taking individual responsibility for spiritual well-being and temporal welfare has always been part of gospel living. One purpose of the Church is to help members fulfill these responsibilities. Priesthood leaders, auxiliary leaders, home teachers, and visiting teachers have important roles in this effort.

Spiritual Well-Being

Principles for improving spiritual well-being include:

Having faith in Jesus Christ and exercising faith unto repentance.

Receiving the saving ordinances of the gospel, including temple ordinances, and partaking of the sacrament weekly to renew baptismal covenants.

Praying daily and studying the gospel of Jesus Christ in the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets.

Obedying God's commandments, such as the laws of chastity, tithing, and honesty, and following the counsel of Church leaders.

Loving God and loving and serving others with "the pure love of Christ" (Moroni 7:47).

Strengthening the family by praying together, studying the scriptures together, and loving and caring for one another.

Attending Church meetings and serving in Church callings and assignments.

Sharing the gospel with friends and relatives.

Identifying and submitting deceased ancestors' names for temple ordinances and doing temple work as often as circumstances allow.

Temporal Welfare

Principles for improving temporal welfare include caring for the poor and needy and becoming self-reliant individually and as families. These principles are outlined in the following paragraphs.

The Doctrine of Caring for the Poor and Needy

The Lord has always commanded His people to care for the poor and needy. He said, "Behold, I say unto you, that ye must visit the poor and the needy and administer to their relief" (D&C 44:6). He further commanded, "And remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that

doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple" (D&C 52:40). During His mortal ministry He taught, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). A measure of members' love for the Lord is the love they show to others by serving and blessing them in their times of need.

In 1834 the Lord taught the manner in which this commandment should be carried out in His Church:

"It is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine.

"But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low.

"For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.

"Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment" (D&C 104:15–18).

Imparting of a person's substance to the poor was deemed essential by Book of Mormon prophets for these reasons:

1. To provide for "him that standeth in need" (Mosiah 4:16).
2. To retain a "remission of . . . sins from day to day" and "walk guiltless before God" (Mosiah 4:26).
3. To ensure that prayers are not in vain and to avoid being among the "hypocrites who do deny the faith" (Alma 34:28).

Saints in modern times are commanded to "learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires" (D&C 88:123). The Lord has promised that "inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me" (D&C 42:31).

Ways to Care for the Poor and Needy

Fasting and Contributing Fast Offerings

One of the most important ways that the Lord has established for Church members to care for the poor and needy is by fasting and contributing fast offerings.

Fasting, accompanied by prayer, is a form of worship. The Lord has commanded His people to fast

to help them draw close to Him, overcome worldliness, gain spiritual strength, increase their compassion, and prepare themselves for service. Fasting is fundamental to spiritual well-being and temporal welfare. (See Isaiah 58:6–11.)

When Church members fast, they should follow the pattern set by the Savior. They set aside food, drink, and worldly concerns. They also commune with Heavenly Father and turn their hearts to Him and to the welfare of others.

The Church designates one Sunday each month as a fast day. On this day Church members go without food and drink for two consecutive meals. They attend fast and testimony meeting and give to the Church a fast offering at least equal to the value of the food they would have eaten. If possible, members should be very generous and give much more than the value of two meals.

The bishop uses fast offerings to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, and relieve the afflicted.

Other Ways to Care for the Needy

Church members can show compassion for the poor and needy in many other ways. They can minister personally to those in need, giving of their time, talents, and spiritual and emotional strength. Members also can pray for the needy. Everyone can give something to others (see Mark 12:41–44).

When members have love in their hearts and hearken to the Holy Ghost, they do not need to be told all the ways in which they should care for the poor and needy. Some opportunities for such service will come through Church callings and assignments. Other opportunities are present in homes, neighborhoods, and communities. There are no limits to what a person may freely offer. Examples include service to the homeless, the disabled, the emotionally and spiritually distressed, the widows and fatherless, and other poor and needy people. Members could also contribute to humanitarian aid.

Church members who begin to reach out to those who are less fortunate will become more aware of their needs. They will become more compassionate and eager to relieve the suffering of others. They will be guided by the Holy Ghost to know whom to serve and how to help meet their needs.

Basic Principles of Church Welfare Assistance

Providing in the Lord's Way

Through the Church, the Lord has established a way to care for the poor and needy and help them

regain their self-reliance. When Church members are doing all they can to provide for themselves but still cannot meet their basic needs, they first should turn to their families for help. When this is not sufficient, the Church stands ready to help. Members who need such assistance should call on their bishops.

When people give, they should do so freely and with a spirit of love, recognizing that Heavenly Father is the source of all blessings and that those blessings should be used to serve others.

When people receive help, they should accept it with gratitude and humility, thanking the Lord for His goodness and the goodness of others (see D&C 56:18; 78:19). People who receive assistance should use it to release themselves from the bondage and limitations of their need, becoming more self-reliant and more able to give to others.

Providing in the Lord's way humbles the giver, exalts the receiver, and sanctifies both (see D&C 104:15–18). Both become more able to give as Christ gives.

The Lord's Storehouse

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Savior explained that the Saints should give their offerings for the poor to the bishop. The bishop keeps these offerings "in [the Lord's] storehouse" and uses them as needed "to administer to the poor and the needy" (D&C 42:34; see also D&C 42:29–36; 78:3–7, 13–14; 82:14–19).

The Lord's storehouse receives, holds in trust, and dispenses consecrated offerings of the Saints. The storehouse may be as simple or sophisticated as circumstances require. It may be a list of available services, money in an account, food in a pantry, or commodities in a building. A storehouse is established when faithful members consecrate to the bishop their time, talents, skills, compassion, materials, and financial means in caring for the poor and in building up the kingdom of God on the earth.

The Lord's storehouse, therefore, exists in each ward. The bishop is the agent of the storehouse. Guided by inspiration from the Lord, he distributes the Saints' offerings to the poor and needy. He is assisted by priesthood quorums and the Relief Society. He is instructed and supported in his responsibilities by stake and area leaders.

As the bishop administers the resources of the Lord's storehouse to help the poor and needy, he should ensure that organized Church welfare assistance does not replace personal, compassionate caring of individuals for one another.

The Scope of Church Welfare Assistance

There are many reasons why Church members may not have the resources to meet their basic needs. Members may be elderly or disabled. They may have made unwise choices, either deliberately or because they lacked the education they needed to apply the principles of work and self-reliance to prepare for times of adversity. They may have been deprived of necessary resources because of natural disasters or because of economic and political problems in their nations.

Church leaders should do what they can to help meet the basic needs of members in any of these circumstances and to help the members become self-reliant. But in their work as Church leaders, they should not concentrate on solving economic and political problems in their communities or nations. Rather, ward and stake leaders should concentrate on helping people overcome those causes of welfare need that the individual or family can remedy.

Individual Church members, as citizens, may work toward solving economic and political problems by participating in worthy projects sponsored by their communities.

Becoming Self-Reliant

The Savior has commanded the Church and its members to be self-reliant and independent (see D&C 78:13–14). Heavenly Father has given all of His children everything they have—their talents, abilities, and material goods—and has made them stewards over these blessings (see D&C 104:11–13). To fulfill this stewardship honorably, Church members should become self-reliant, using these blessings to take care of themselves and their families. Members who are physically and emotionally able should not shift the burden of their own or their family's well-being to someone else.

To become self-reliant, a person must work. Work is physical, mental, or spiritual effort. It is a basic source of happiness, self-worth, and prosperity. Through work, people accomplish many good things in their lives.

In clarifying the purposes of welfare, in 1936 the First Presidency made the following statement about the importance of work in helping Church members become self-reliant:

“Our primary purpose was to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self respect be once more established amongst

our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be reenthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, 3).

As people become self-reliant, they are better prepared to endure adversities such as loss of employment, physical disabilities, and natural disasters without becoming dependent on others. People who are self-reliant are also better able to care for others in need. In addition, they honor the sacred relationships that the Lord has established between husbands and wives, parents and children (see Mosiah 4:14–15; 13:20; D&C 83:2, 4).

Church members should become self-reliant in six basic areas: education; physical health; employment; home storage; resource management; and spiritual, emotional, and social strength. Suggestions for doing this are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Education

The Lord has commanded His people to gain knowledge (see D&C 88:77–80, 118; 93:53; 130:18–19; 131:6). With knowledge and wisdom, they are able to discern truth from error and make better choices. They also are better able to understand God and others, and they have a deeper love for them.

To become self-reliant in education, Church members should study the scriptures and other good books. They also should improve their ability to read, write, and do basic mathematics. They should learn to communicate effectively with others. They also should obtain formal education or equivalent training that is necessary for employment. In addition, members should take advantage of opportunities to gain more knowledge.

Physical Health

One purpose of mortality is to obtain bodies, a necessary step in becoming like Heavenly Father. The Lord has commanded His people to keep their bodies and minds healthy (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; D&C 88:124; 89). By doing this, they are better able to take care of their needs and serve others.

To become self-reliant in physical health, Church members should obey the Word of Wisdom. They also should exercise regularly, eat nutritious food, get adequate sleep, and avoid substances or practices that would harm their bodies, minds, or spirits.

Church members should provide for adequate medical and dental care, including insurance where possible. They also should keep their homes and surroundings clean and sanitary.

Employment

The Lord has commanded His people to work and provide for the needs of themselves and their families (see Genesis 3:17–19; 1 Timothy 5:8; D&C 42:42; 56:17). Suitable employment also provides opportunities to improve talents and develop the divine attributes within each person. People are happier if their employment suits their interests and abilities and meets their needs.

To become self-reliant in employment, Church members should carefully prepare for and select a suitable occupation. They also should become skilled at their work through education, training, and experience. They should be diligent, hardworking, and trustworthy. They also should give honest work for the pay and benefits they receive.

Home Storage

To be self-reliant, Church members need sufficient food, clothing, and shelter. They also need to know how to provide for themselves in times of adversity (see D&C 38:30). Prophets have therefore counseled members to store, use, and know how to produce and prepare essential items.

Church leaders have not given an exact formula for what to store. Rather, they suggest that Church members begin by storing what would be required to keep them alive if they did not have anything else to eat. Depending on where members live, those basics might include water, wheat or other grains (such as corn and rice), legumes (dried beans, peas, lentils), salt, honey or sugar, powdered milk, and cooking oil. When members have stored enough of these essentials to meet the basic needs of their families for one year, they may decide to add other items that they are accustomed to eating. All stored items should be used and replaced regularly to keep them from spoiling.

Through careful planning, most Church members can store a year's supply of the basic items needed to sustain life. However, some members do not have the money or space for such storage, and some are prohibited by law from storing a year's supply of food. These members should store as much as they can according to their circumstances. All members can provide themselves with added security by learning to produce and prepare basic food items.

Resource Management

Church members should be wise stewards by exercising good judgment in managing and replenishing the resources with which the Lord has blessed

them (see Matthew 25:14–30; 2 Nephi 9:51; D&C 59:16–21; 104:11–18, 78–79; 119).

To become self-reliant in resource management, Church members should pay tithes and offerings, avoid unnecessary debt, save for the future, and satisfy all of their promised obligations. Members also should use their resources, including their time, frugally and avoid wasting them. They should serve others by sharing time, talents, and resources with them.

Spiritual, Emotional, and Social Strength

Members become spiritually and emotionally self-reliant as they apply the principles summarized under "Spiritual Well-Being" on page 255.

Members become socially self-reliant as they develop good relationships with family members and with others (see Matthew 7:1–2, 12; Luke 10:27; D&C 64:9–10).

Area Welfare Leadership

Area Presidency

Members of the Area Presidency have the following responsibilities for spiritual and temporal welfare in the area:

They teach members the principles of spiritual well-being and temporal welfare.

They teach leaders their welfare duties. They counsel leaders to search the scriptures to further understand welfare principles and duties.

They set welfare priorities and clarify welfare policies in the area.

They oversee Church welfare operations, including Church employment offices, Deseret Industries stores, storehouses, canneries, grain storage facilities, and commodity production projects.

They seek approval for Church payment of a needy member's medical expenses that are expected to exceed \$5,000.

They organize regional welfare committees (see page 259).

Area Welfare Director or Director for Temporal Affairs

Area welfare directors (in the United States and Canada) or directors for temporal affairs (in other areas) are welfare specialists assigned to geographical areas of the Church. They are full-time employees of the Church. Under the direction of the Presiding

Bishopric, they assist Area Presidencies and local priesthood leaders in the Church's temporal matters. This includes the following responsibilities:

They help make plans for meeting welfare needs in the area.

They instruct local leaders as requested by the Area Presidency.

They give advice on technical issues such as government regulations, safety matters, and financial procedures.

They help the Area Presidency oversee Church welfare operations. Under the direction of the Area Presidency, they provide instruction and support to regional welfare committees and agent stake operating committees.

The Area Presidency and the area welfare director or director for temporal affairs may be assisted by area welfare agents, who represent the Area Presidency in Church welfare and humanitarian services. These welfare agents are called by the First Presidency if serving away from home or by the Area Presidency if living at home.

Regional Welfare Leadership

Regional Welfare Committee

Area Presidencies create welfare regions within their area and organize a regional welfare committee for each welfare region. These committees teach and inspire leaders in their welfare responsibilities, coordinate welfare activities in the welfare region, and review and improve the service of local welfare operations (where they exist). Each committee consists of all stake presidents, all chairmen of stake bishops' welfare councils, and all stake Relief Society presidents in the welfare region. The Area Presidency appoints one stake president to be chairman of the committee.

The committee meets at least twice a year to coordinate welfare activities at the regional level. A suggested agenda for the committee's meetings is provided on pages 51–52 in *Book 1*.

Regional Welfare Agent

The Area Presidency appoints a Melchizedek Priesthood holder who has welfare experience to be the regional welfare agent for each regional welfare committee. He is the executive secretary of the committee and reports to the stake president who is chairman. He may serve as the regional welfare agent to more than one regional welfare committee.

Stake Welfare Leadership

Stake Presidency

The stake president, assisted by his counselors, oversees the spiritual and temporal welfare of stake members. This responsibility is outlined on pages 4 and 7–9 in *Book 1*.

Stake Welfare Committee

See pages 315–16 in the “Gospel Teaching and Leadership” section.

Stake Bishops' Welfare Council

See page 54 in *Book 1*.

Stake Relief Society President

See page 195 in the “Relief Society” section.

Stake Welfare Specialists

The stake presidency may call welfare specialists to assist the stake welfare committee as needed. These specialists should be stake members who can assist other members in such things as finding employment, improving nutrition and sanitation, storing food, obtaining health care, improving literacy, managing finances, and helping meet other welfare needs.

Ward Welfare Leadership

Bishopric

The bishop oversees the spiritual and temporal welfare of ward members. His office carries with it a special mandate to care for the poor and needy (see D&C 84:112; 107:68). Guided by inspiration and welfare policy, the bishop determines to whom, when, how, and how much welfare assistance is given in his ward. Welfare responsibilities of the bishop and his counselors are outlined on pages 12 and 14–17 in *Book 1*.

Ward Welfare Committee

See page 318 in the “Gospel Teaching and Leadership” section.

Elders Quorum and High Priests Group Leaders

The elders quorum presidency and high priests group leadership help the bishop oversee members'

spiritual and temporal welfare. These responsibilities are outlined on page 165 in the “Melchizedek Priesthood” section.

Relief Society President

Without breaking confidences, the bishop involves the Relief Society president in caring for the poor and needy. He meets with her regularly to review welfare matters in the ward. As assigned by him, she visits the homes of members who need welfare assistance, evaluating the needs and preparing an order for the bishop to review and sign. Her responsibilities are outlined in more detail on pages 196–97 in the “Relief Society” section.

Ward Welfare Specialists

The bishopric may call welfare specialists to assist the ward welfare committee as needed. These specialists should be ward members who can assist other members in such things as finding employment, improving nutrition and sanitation, storing food, obtaining health care, improving literacy, managing finances, and helping meet other welfare needs.