

Elder Gary E. Stevenson

What a wonderful conference it has been. How blessed we are to hear the counsel of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, whom we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators.

The temple provides direction

I remember a warm, sunny afternoon when spring was trying to nudge its way through a long winter in Cache Valley, Utah. My father, whose Saturdays were always filled with chores for his grandsons, stopped by our home with an offer to “go for a ride.” Always happy to ride in Grandpa’s truck, our four- and six-year-old sons scurried into the back jump seat, and I joined my father in the front. Our drive took us through the streets of downtown Logan, which wrap around the Logan Temple, prominently situated on a hill, centered beautifully in the city. As we moved further away from the city, we turned from paved, busy streets to seldom-used dirt roads, where we crossed old bridges and weaved through trees far into the country. We were far from any other traffic and all alone.

Realizing his grandsons were in a place they had not been before, my father stopped the truck. “Do you think we are lost?” he asked the wide-eyed boys as they gazed out the windshield across the valley. Followed by a moment of silent assessment came the profound reply of a young child. “Look,” he said, pointing his finger. “Grandpa, you are never lost when you can see the temple.” Our eyes turned, focusing with his, seeing the sun glistening off the spires of the Logan Temple, far across the valley.

You are never lost when you can see the temple. The temple will provide direction for you and your family in a world filled with chaos. It is an eternal guidepost which will help you from getting lost in the “mist

of darkness.”¹ It is the house of the Lord.² It is a place where covenants are made and eternal ordinances are performed.

Turning to the temple

In the Book of Mormon, King Benjamin directed the Saints of his time and place to gather, “every man having his tent with the door thereof towards the temple.”³ As Church members, we have recently received counsel from modern-day prophets which, if followed, will turn the doors of our homes more fully towards the temple.

The First Presidency has invited “adult members to have a current temple recommend and visit the temple more often” where time and circumstance permit and encouraged members “to replace some leisure activities with temple service.” They also encouraged “newer members and youth of the Church who are 12 years of age and older to live worthy to assist in this great work by serving as proxies for baptisms and confirmations.”⁴ Even our young children have been encouraged to visit the temple grounds and touch the temple.⁵ President Thomas S. Monson once counseled, “As we touch the temple, the temple will touch us.”⁶

We are blessed to live in a temple-building dispensation in which 146 temples have been dedicated or announced.⁷ Under the definition of “Temple” in the Bible Dictionary, we read the following: “It is the most holy of any place of worship on the earth,” followed by this insightful statement: “Only the home can compare with the temple in sacredness.”⁸ For me, this suggests a sacred relationship between the temple and the home. Not only can we turn the doors of our homes to the temple, or the house of the Lord; we can make our homes a “house of the Lord.”

The temple and the home

Recently in a stake conference, all present were invited by the visiting authority, Elder Glen Jenson, an Area Seventy, to take a virtual tour of their homes using their spiritual eyes. I would like to invite each of you to do this also. Wherever your home may be and whatever its configuration, the application of eternal gospel principles within its walls is universal. Let's begin. Imagine that you are opening your front door and walking inside your home. What do you see, and how do you feel? Is it a place of love, peace, and refuge from the world, as is the temple? Is it clean and orderly? As you walk through the rooms of your home, do you see uplifting images which include appropriate pictures of the temple and the Savior? Is your bedroom or sleeping area a place for personal prayer? Is your gathering area or kitchen a place where food is prepared and enjoyed together, allowing uplifting conversation and family time? Are scriptures found in a room where the family can study, pray, and learn together? Can you find your personal gospel study space? Does the music you hear or the entertainment you see, online or otherwise, offend the Spirit? Is the conversation uplifting and without contention? That concludes our tour. Perhaps you, as I, found a few spots that need some "home improvement"—hopefully not an "extreme home makeover."

Whether our living space is large or small, humble or extravagant, there is a place for each of these gospel priorities in each of our homes.

In order to keep the temple and those who attend it sacred and worthy, the Lord has established standards through His servants, the prophets. We may be well advised to consider together, in family council, standards for our homes to keep them sacred and to allow them to be a "house of the Lord." The admonition to "establish . . . a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house

of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God"⁹ provides divine insight into the type of home the Lord would have us build. Doing such begins the construction of a "spiritual mansion" in which we all may reside regardless of our worldly circumstance—a home filled with treasure that "neither moth nor rust doth corrupt."¹⁰

There exists a righteous unity between the temple and the home. Understanding the eternal nature of the temple will draw you to your family; understanding the eternal nature of the family will draw you to the temple. President Howard W. Hunter stated, "In the ordinances of the temple, the foundations of the eternal family are sealed in place."¹¹

President Boyd K. Packer counseled: "Say the word *temple*. Say it quietly and reverently. Say it over and over again. *Temple. Temple. Temple.* Add the word *holy. Holy Temple.* Say it as though it were capitalized, no matter where it appears in the sentence.

"Temple. One other word is equal in importance to a Latter-day Saint. *Home.* Put the words *holy temple* and *home* together, and you have described the house of the Lord!"¹²

Preparing for eternal blessings

Last year Primary children gathered, thousands of them, from around the world in each of their wards and branches, singing to their families and ward members as part of the Primary sacrament meeting presentation. They sang of desire, promises, and preparation. The things of which they sang begin in sacred homes and continue in sacred temples. I think you will hear the tune in your hearts as I read the words:

I love to see the temple.
I'm going there someday
To feel the Holy Spirit,
To listen and to pray.

For the temple is a house of God,
A place of love and beauty.
I'll prepare myself while I am young;
This is my sacred duty.

I love to see the temple.
I'll go inside someday.
I'll cov'nant with my Father;
I'll promise to obey.
For the temple is a holy place
Where we are sealed together.
As a child of God, I've learned this
truth:
A fam'ly is forever.¹³

President Boyd K. Packer stated, "The ultimate purpose of all we teach is to unite parents and children in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are happy at home, sealed in an eternal marriage, linked to their generations, and assured of exaltation in the presence of our Heavenly Father."¹⁴

I testify to you that the application of these principles will help turn the doors of your home to the temple, or house of the Lord, and more fully allow you to make your sacred home a house of the Lord.

I conclude where I began, with the words of an innocent child: "You are never lost when you can see the temple." And I add my testimony of the sacred nature of our homes and of the Lord's temples. I know that God is our loving Heavenly Father. I bear witness of Jesus Christ and of His role as our Savior and Redeemer and of living prophets authorized to exercise all priesthood keys from Joseph Smith to Thomas S. Monson. I do so in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. 1 Nephi 8:24.
2. See Topical Guide, "Temple, House of the Lord," 519; "Temple, House of the Lord," in Guide to the Scriptures, at scriptures.lds.org.
3. Mosiah 2:6.
4. First Presidency letter, Mar. 11, 2003.
5. See Thomas S. Monson, "Finding Peace," *Ensign*, Mar. 2004, 5–6.

6. In JoAnn Jolley, "A Shining Beacon on a Hill: Jordan River Temple Is Dedicated," *Ensign*, Jan. 1982, 77: "Early in the week, Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Quorum of the Twelve suggested deep spiritual meaning in the physical presence of the temple. He recounted the late Elder Matthew Cowley's story about a grandfather who took his small granddaughter on a birthday visit to the Salt Lake Temple grounds. With permission of the groundskeeper, they walked to the large doors of the temple. He suggested that she place her hand on the temple wall and then on the door, saying tenderly to her, 'Remember that this day you touched the temple. One day you will enter this door.' His special gift to his granddaughter was an appreciation for the House of the Lord. Likewise, counseled Elder Monson, 'As we touch the temple, the temple will touch us.'"
7. See "Temples around the World," at temples.lds.org. Click on "Chronological."
8. Bible Dictionary, "Temple," 781.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 88:119.
10. See Matthew 6:19–20; 3 Nephi 13:19–20.
11. Howard W. Hunter, "A Temple-Motivated People," *Ensign*, Feb. 1995, 2.
12. Boyd K. Packer, in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 24; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 20–21.
13. "I Love to See the Temple," *Children's Songbook*, 95.
14. Boyd K. Packer, in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 8; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 8.

President Eyring

The choir and congregation will now sing "Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah." At the conclusion of the singing, Elders José A. Teixeira and F. Michael Watson of the Seventy will address us. They will be followed by Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation sang
"Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah."
