

# Personal Service

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Cooper Mt Ward Joint Relief Society & Priesthood

Introduction .....	1
Personal Welfare Service.....	3
Mosiah 4:16 – Commandments toward others.....	3
Mosiah 4:17-27 – Doctrines & Principles.....	3
v19 – We are all beggars.....	3
v20 – God answers our petitions .....	3
v22 – Everything belongs to God.....	3
v17-18, 22 – We receive same judgment we give .....	4
V17-18,22 – Not ours to judge others .....	5
Ward – Who is called by God to <i>alone</i> hold the keys of judgment in the ward? .....	5
Who is called by God to help the Bishop decide? (And who isn't?).....	6
What is our proper response to a call to service .....	6
What judgment are we to make then?.....	7
v24-25 – Doctrine of intent.....	4
v26 – Retaining a remission of sins .....	4
v27 – All things done in wisdom and order .....	4
Choosing correct behavior – the Gift of the Holy Ghost .....	8
References.....	9
Scriptures .....	9
Articles.....	10

## Introduction

- One area of my responsibilities and duties as a bishop that weighs heavy upon my mind is that of caring for the poor and needy
  - It has been on my mind and today I can look back over the past 4-5 months and I see the results of several things how they dovetail together
1. Call Rebecca Welling as "humanitarian specialist" reporting directly to the Bishopric
    - Can still remember the feeling from the Spirit when the thought came to me to call Rebecca and it "unfolded" to me as to what her calling would mean to our ward
      - Increase in quantity and "quality" of ward and youth Service projects
        - Better involvement with the Stake and regional humanitarian projects
      - Service that would put us "out" in the community

- Gordon B Hinckley:  
 "I wondered back in those days how anything the Church did could eclipse in anyone's judgment the historic gathering of our people to these western valleys of the United States. That was a movement of such epic proportions that I felt nothing could ever be so noteworthy. But I have discovered something of interest in the last short while. We receive many prominent visitors in the office of the First Presidency. They include heads of state and ambassadors of nations. A few weeks ago, we entertained the mayor of one of the great cities of the world. We have, likewise, recently entertained the vice president and the ambassador of Ecuador, the ambassador from Lithuania, the ambassador from Belarus, and others. In our conversations not one of these visitors mentioned the great pioneer journey of our forebears. But each of them, independently, spoke in high praise of our welfare program and our humanitarian efforts." ("I Was an Hungred, and Ye Gave Me Meat," Ensign, May 2004, 58)

- I feel this can be true at a local level – it is part of what unfolded to me that day

2. Felt to have Sister Dalton speak on service on Mother's day
3. Quilting pot luck night
4. Youth Service projects
  - Homeless shelter
  - Oregon Food bank
  - Next month's activity
5. Felt impressed to discuss service in this lesson
  - Focus on "personal welfare service"
  - Today I can see the context here and how it fits with the other things

## Personal Welfare Service

- How we discharge our personal responsibility is important – very important – to our eternal salvation
  - Russel M Nelson:  
"Few, if any, of the Lord's instructions are stated more often, or given greater emphasis, than the commandment to care for the poor and the needy" ("In the Lord's Own Way," Ensign, May 1986, 25)
  - Marion G Romney:  
"In conclusion, brothers and sisters, it seems to me that the scriptures clearly establish the fact that caring for the poor is a covenantal obligation" ("Caring for the Poor—A Covenantal Obligation," Ensign, Nov. 1978, 87)
- I have spent many hours studying, agonizing over what to say and how, praying and pondering in preparation of this lesson
- I have felt to look to King Benjamin and Nephi for guidance
  - Mosiah 4:16 - commandment with regard to service
  - How we are to be guided in Personal Service
    - Mosiah 4:17-27 – doctrines & principles
    - 2 Nephi 32 – How to know in each situation

## Mosiah 4:16 – Commandments toward others

- *"succor those that stand in need of your succor"*
- *"administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need"*
- *"not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain"*

## Mosiah 4:17-27 – Doctrines & Principles (8)

- There may be more
- These are not in order presented by King Benjamin
- 1. v19 – *We are all beggars***
  - "We are all beggars" and depend upon God for our substance
  - We are all at the same "level" in this, none better than the other
- 2. v20 – *God answers our petitions***
  - "Has he suffered you in vain?"
  - God answers our petitions we should answer others
- 3. v22 – *Everything belongs to God***
  - Our substances "doth not belong to you but to God"

#### **4. v24-25 – Doctrine of intent**

- Principle or doctrine of intent – we will be judged according to not only what we do but also as to the intent of our hearts
  - "I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give"
  - 2 Cor 9:6-7 (Paul)  
"He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."  
*Every man according as he purposeth in his heart*, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver"
  - Moroni 7:6-7 (Moroni)  
"For behold, God hath said a man being evil cannot do that which is good; for if he offereth a gift, or prayeth unto God, *except he shall do it with real intent it profiteth him nothing*.  
For behold, it is not counted unto him for righteousness"

#### **5. v26 – Retaining a remission of sins**

- To retain remission of sins – impart of substance "every man according to that which he hath"

#### **6. v27 – All things done in wisdom and order**

- All these things are done in "wisdom and order" we shouldn't "run faster" than we have strength

#### **7. v17-18, 22 – We receive same judgment we give**

- "How much more just will be your condemnation"
- We receive the same judgment from God that we give those who petition us
  - Matt 7:2-3 (JST)  
"Judge not unrighteously, that ye be not judged; but judge righteous judgment."  
*For with what judgment ye shall judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again"*
  - Alma 41:14-15 (Alma the Younger)  
"see that you are merciful unto your brethren; deal justly, judge righteously, ... if ye do all these things then shall ye receive your reward; yea, ye shall have mercy restored unto you again; ye shall have justice restored unto you again; ye shall have a righteous judgment restored unto you again; and ye shall have good rewarded unto you again."

*For that which ye do send out shall return unto you again, and be restored"*

#### **8. V17-18,22 – Not ours to judge others**

- "And if ye judge the man who putteth up his petition"
- Not ours to judge those who petition us

#### **Ward – Who is called by God to *alone* hold the keys of judgment in the ward?**

- Bishop
  - Ruben J Clark:

"By the word of the Lord the sole mandate to care for and the sole discretion in caring for, the poor of the Church is lodged in the bishop. ... It is his duty and his only to determine to whom, when, how, and how much shall be given to any member of his ward from Church funds and as ward help" (As quoted in ["The Role of Bishops in Welfare Services,"](#) Marion G Romney, *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 79)
  - "The bishop is entrusted with the sacred responsibility of using Church funds and commodities to care for the poor and needy members of the ward" (Church handbook of Instructions, pg 14)
- The bishop "provides welfare assistance to accomplish the following objectives:
  1. Help members become self reliant and stand independent of all welfare assistance, regardless of its source.
  2. Help members become stronger spiritually and learn to provide for others
  3. Build integrity, self-respect, dignity and soundness of character in each person who receives help" (Church handbook of Instructions, pg 14)
- In discharging his responsibility the guideline for the Bishop is to "Draw upon the Lord's Storehouse" (Church handbook of Instructions, pg 15)
  - *What is the "Lord's Storehouse"?*
    - "The Lord's storehouse includes the time, talents, skills, compassion, consecrated materials and the financial resources of faithful Church members. The bishop is the Lord's agent in using these resources to assist the poor and needy" (Church handbook of Instructions, pg 15)

## **Who is called by God to help the Bishop decide? (And who isn't?)**

- "The Bishop is assisted by Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society leaders, as well as home teachers and visiting teachers." (Church handbook of Instructions, pg 14)
- RS President:
  - "Where appropriate and without breaking confidence, the bishop may include the Relief Society President in determining what assistance to provide" (Church handbook of Instructions, pg 14 )
  - "works with the bishop to seek out and care for the poor and needy" (Church handbook of Instructions, pg 197 )
  - Compassionate Service leader
    - "coordinates the efforts of the Relief Society...through compassionate service"(Church handbook of Instructions, pg 199)
- Quorum President & Group Leaders
  - Marion G Romney:  
"In his temporal administrations, the bishop looks at every needy person as a temporary problem, caring for them until they can help themselves. The priesthood quorums must look at their needy brethren as a continuing problem, until not only their temporal needs are met but their spiritual ones also" (["The Role of Bishops in Welfare Services,"](#) [Ensign, Nov. 1977, 79](#))

## **How does the Bishop Judge?**

- Gather information from all sources
  - "To determine what welfare assistance to render, the bishop considers the causes of members needs, He also evaluates what members have done and may do to provide for themselves and their families. If he feels that assistance is justified, he completes a Needs and Resources Analysis form. He then determines how much assistance to provide as Church welfare and when and how to provide it" (Church handbook of Instructions, pg 14)
- Seek the guidance of the Spirit
  - "Individual circumstances vary, so the bishop should seek guidance from the Lord in each situation" (Church handbook of Instructions, pg 14)

## **What is our proper response to a call to service**

- *"What should our reaction be when we are called upon by the bishop (or by extension the Bishop's representative) to give of our resources?"*

- "Why are we giving service in this particular case?" or "It would be easy to give service to *this* person but not *that* person?"
- Have you ever felt this way when asked to give service?
  - How can we not feel this way?
    - Marci Burnside:  
"If people knew all the information in a particular case, the negative feelings about service would be eliminated in most cases. The key is, being able to have the right attitude when you don't know all the information" (Private correspondence, May 19, 2004)
    - Art Piper:  
"I was not there when the Bishop was deciding"
- *"What should we do if we think the bishop is making a mistake in how he is administering the bishop's storehouse?"*
- Steven D Dalton:  
" Let me answer with another question: 'What should you do if you disagree with how the church is spending our tithing money?'  
I think that my job is to PAY the tithing, not spend it. Someone else has that responsibility, and they are accountable for how they carry out that responsibility, and frankly, I could not care less how it is being spent. I am right with the Lord and have kept my covenants. In other words, I HAVE NO JUDGEMENT TO MAKE on whether the bishop is right or wrong. I DO have judgment on the help and almsgiving I offer others of my own volition, and I will be accountable to the Lord for using good and righteous judgment there, but except in my duty as Stake President, I have NO ROLE in how you administer the storehouse. That is a completely separate issue from private almsgiving." (Private correspondence, May 17, 2004)

### **What judgment are we to make then?**

- Personal alms giving
- *How do we judge when we are in a situation where it is not the Bishop's judgment directing service to be provided?*
  - The "beggar" on the corner holding up the "will work for food" sign
  - Ours *not* to judge the person's circumstances and *if* assistance is needed
    - "Perhaps thou shalt say...." (v17-18)
    - No different than if the Bishop judges for us that assistance is needed

- How does he judge and how does it apply to us? (see [How does the Bishop Judge?](#))
- Ours to judge *if* we have the "time, talents & possessions" to render assistance
  - Ours to judge if we should give in that circumstance
  - More later on how to judge righteously in each situation (See section on ["Choosing correct behavior"](#))
- *"Can we error in giving to others of our own volition?"*
  - Given a choice, I feel personally it is always better to error on the side of compassion
- *"How should you feel when you've given service and then found out later that you were taken advantage of?"*
  - D&C 65:10-11  
 "I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.  
 And ye ought to say in your hearts—let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee according to thy deeds."

### **Choosing correct behavior**

- How do we then choose correct behavior?
- Let the principles & doctrines guide us not a list of behaviors
  - The Lord does not give us a detailed checklist for each situation
  - The doctrines and principles must become "woven within" us – that is part of who we are and think
    - This requires that we *study and ponder* the scriptures
- Gift of the Holy Ghost
  - Each one of us has the gift of the Holy Ghost as a guide
    - We each have the right to personal revelation to guide us when we are uncertain in situations what to do
  - 2 Nephi 32:1-5 (Nephi)  
 "And now, behold, my beloved brethren, I suppose that ye ponder somewhat in your hearts concerning that which ye should do after ye have entered in by the way. But, behold, why do ye ponder these things in your hearts?  
 Do ye not remember that I said unto you that after ye had received the Holy Ghost ye could speak with the tongue of angels? And now, how could ye speak with the tongue of angels save it were by the



Holy Ghost?

Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, *feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.*

Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.

For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive *the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do.*"

- I feel this is directly related to my feelings:
  - "We as members of the Cooper Mountain Ward need to have a greater reliance upon the Holy Ghost in our lives. And that need is going to grow greater" (Mike Baird, "The Spirit in our lives", Cooper Mountain Ward sacrament meeting, Jan 26, 2003)

## References

### Scriptures

- Alma 34:28-29 (Amulek)

"if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith.

Therefore, if ye do not remember to be charitable, ye are as dross, which the refiners do cast out, (it being of no worth) and is trodden under foot of men"
- D&C 52:40

"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 104:17-18

"For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare...  
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"

## **Articles**

- Gordon B. Hinckley, "I Was an Hungred, and Ye Gave Me Meat," Ensign, May 2004, 58
- Russell M. Nelson, "In the Lord's Own Way," Ensign, May 1986, 25
- Marion G. Romney, "Caring for the Poor and Needy," Ensign, Jan. 1973, 97
- Marion G. Romney, "The Role of Bishops in Welfare Services," Ensign, Nov. 1977, 79
- Name Withheld, "One of 'Those' Families," Ensign, Oct. 1989, 17