

SUMMARY OF A LEADER'S GUIDE TO WELFARE

PROVIDING IN THE LORD'S WAY





The real long term objective of the Welfare Plan is the building of character in the members of the Church, givers and receivers, rescuing all that is finest down deep inside of them, and bringing to flower and fruitage the latent richness of the spirit, which after all is the mission and purpose and reason for being of this Church.

J. Reuben Clark Jr., special meeting of stake presidents, Oct. 2, 1936

PROVIDING IN THE LORD'S WAY

The purpose of Church welfare is to help Church members become self-reliant, care for the poor and needy, and serve others.

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Mark 12:41-44

MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Priesthood and Relief Society leaders should help members understand their responsibilities for themselves, their families, and others.

PROVIDE FOR SELF AND FAMILY

Church members are responsible for their own spiritual and temporal well-being. Blessed with the gift of agency, they have the privilege of setting their own course, solving their own problems, and striving to become self-reliant. Members do this under the inspiration of the Lord and with the labor of their own hands.

ELEMENTS OF SELF-RELIANCE

Self-reliance is the ability, commitment, and effort to provide the necessities of life for self and

family. As members become self-reliant, they are also better able to serve and care for others.

When Church members are doing all they can to provide for themselves but still cannot meet their basic needs, they should first turn to their families for help. When this is not sufficient, the Church stands ready to assist.

Some of the areas in which members should become self-reliant are outlined below and on page 2.

Education. Education can enrich, ennoble, and provide understanding that leads to a happier life. Members should study the scriptures and other good books; improve their ability to read, write, and do basic mathematics; and obtain skills needed for suitable employment.



Health. The Lord has commanded members to take care of their minds and bodies. They should obey the Word of Wisdom, eat nutritious food, exercise regularly, and get adequate sleep. They should shun substances or practices that abuse their bodies or minds and that could lead to addiction. They should practice good sanitation and hygiene and obtain adequate medical and dental care. They should also strive to cultivate good relationships with family members and others.

Employment. Work is the foundation upon which self-reliance and temporal well-being rest. Members should prepare for and carefully select a suitable occupation or self-employment that will provide for their own and their families' needs. They should become skilled at their jobs, be diligent and trustworthy, and give honest work for the pay and benefits they receive.

Home Storage. To help care for themselves and their families, members should:

- Build a three-month supply of food that is part of their normal diet.
- Store drinking water in case the water supply becomes polluted or disrupted.
- Gradually build a longer-term supply of food that will sustain life.

See *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage*, 3 (item 04008).

Finances. To become financially self-reliant, members should:

- Pay tithes and offerings.
- Avoid unnecessary debt.
- Use a budget and live within a plan.
- Gradually build a financial reserve by regularly saving a little.
- Teach family members principles of financial management.

See *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Finances*, 3 (item 04007).

Spiritual Strength. Spirituality is essential to a person's temporal and eternal well-being. Church members should exercise faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, obey God's commandments, pray daily, study the scriptures and teachings of the latter-day prophets, attend Church meetings, and serve in Church callings and assignments.

CARE FOR OTHERS

During His mortal ministry, the Savior walked among the poor, the sick, and the distressed, ministering to their needs and blessing them with healing and hope. He taught His disciples to do the same. Reaching out to those in distress is a central characteristic of the disciples of Jesus Christ (see John 13:35).

In our day the Lord has again 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). Church members are encouraged to give personal compassionate service to those in need. They should be “anxiously engaged in a good cause,” serving without being asked or assigned (see D&C 58:26–27).

The Lord has described His way for caring for the poor and needy. He instructed the Saints to “impart of your substance unto the poor, . . . and [it] shall be laid before the bishop . . . [and] shall be kept in my storehouse, to administer to the poor and the needy” (D&C 42:31, 34).

The Lord further explained that these offerings should include members’ talents. These talents are “to be cast into the Lord’s storehouse, . . . every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God” (D&C 82:18–19).

The Lord’s storehouse is not limited to a building used to distribute food to the poor. It includes the faithful offerings of time, talents, compassion, materials, and financial means of faithful members given to the bishop to care for the poor and needy. The Lord’s storehouse, then, exists in each ward. The bishop is the agent of the Lord’s storehouse.

STAKE PRESIDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The stake presidency ensures that bishops understand welfare principles and carry out their divine mandate to seek out and care for the poor. The stake president counsels with bishops and reviews fast-offering donations and expenditures.

The stake presidency may be assigned to provide priesthood leadership to welfare operations such as a bishops' storehouse or an employment resource center.

Stake presidents attend coordinating council meetings to receive instruction in various Church matters, including welfare principles and duties. In these meetings, leaders consider ways to foster self-reliance, care for the

needy, and encourage fast-offering donations.

Stake presidents also coordinate multistake welfare and emergency response efforts.

BISHOP'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The bishop has a divine mandate to seek out and care for the poor (see D&C 84:112). He directs the welfare work in the ward. His goal is to help members help themselves and become self-reliant. (In branches, the branch president has these same welfare responsibilities.)

Bishops are blessed with the gift of discernment to understand how best to help those in need. Each individual circumstance is different and requires inspiration. Guided by the Spirit and the basic



The bishop meets with members in need and reviews how best to render assistance and help them help themselves.

welfare principles described in this section, the bishop determines whom to assist, how much to give, and how long to assist.

Generally, a bishop assists only those members who currently live within his own ward's boundaries. On rare occasions the bishop, under the inspiration of the Spirit, may assist individuals who are not members of the Church.

The bishop keeps confidential the welfare needs of members. He shares only the information that is needed by priesthood leaders, Relief Society leaders, or others who provide assistance.

Bishops who have concerns about welfare abuse or fraud may call the bishops' help line (1-801-240-7887) or the area office. When a bishop does not know a member, he should contact the member's previous bishop before giving welfare assistance.

BASIC WELFARE PRINCIPLES FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE

The bishop should be guided by the following basic welfare principles as he cares for the poor and needy:

- ***Seek out the poor.*** It is not enough to assist only when asked. The bishop should encourage priesthood and Relief Society leaders, along with home teachers and visiting teachers, to help identify those members who need assistance.

- ***Promote personal responsibility.*** The bishop reviews with members what resources and efforts they and their family can provide to meet their needs.
- ***Sustain life, not lifestyle.*** The bishop provides basic life-sustaining necessities. He does not provide assistance to maintain an affluent living standard.
- ***Provide commodities before cash.*** When possible, the bishop provides members with commodities instead of giving them money or paying their bills. Where bishops' storehouses are not available, fast offerings may be used to buy needed commodities.
- ***Give work opportunities.*** Bishops ask those who receive assistance to work to the extent of their ability for what they receive. Bishops teach the importance of work and give meaningful work assignments. The ward council compiles and maintains a list of meaningful work opportunities.

CHURCH RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO HELP THE POOR

WARD COUNCIL

Members of the ward council, particularly priesthood quorums and the Relief Society, help the bishop meet members' welfare needs. These leaders are assisted



Under the bishop's direction, the ward council helps resolve welfare needs.

by home teachers, visiting teachers, and others who have special skills.

As needed, confidential matters may be discussed in the priesthood executive committee meeting, with the Relief Society presidency invited to attend.

PRIESTHOOD QUORUMS AND THE RELIEF SOCIETY

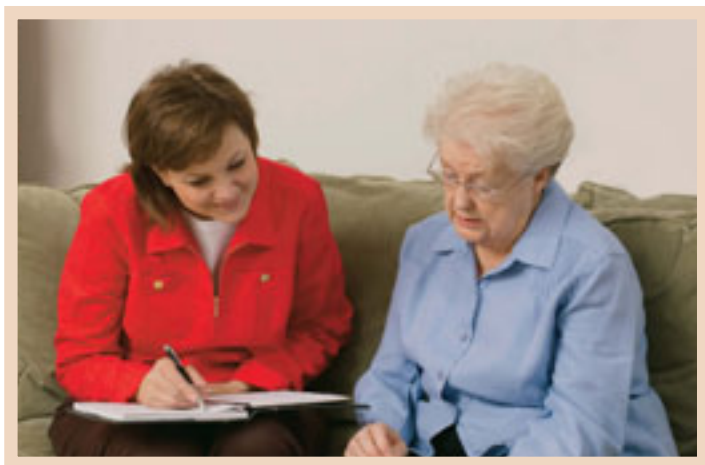
Welfare is central to the role of priesthood quorums and the Relief Society. It should be regularly discussed in presidency meetings. Under the direction of the bishop, priesthood quorums and the Relief Society help members find solutions to welfare needs and become self-reliant.

RELIEF SOCIETY PRESIDENT

In addition to her welfare duties described in the previous paragraphs, the Relief Society president normally assists the bishop by visiting members who need welfare assistance. She helps them assess their needs and suggests to the bishop what assistance to provide. The bishop and Relief Society president may use the Needs and Resources Analysis form to assist them (item 32290).

WARD WELFARE SPECIALISTS

The bishopric may call an employment specialist and other welfare specialists. These specialists should be ward members



When appropriate, the bishop assigns the ward Relief Society president to visit members to assess their needs and help determine what assistance to provide.

who help other ward members with such things as job placement, education and training, nutrition and sanitation, the Perpetual Education Fund, home storage, health care, family finances, and other welfare needs.

FAST OFFERINGS AND TITHING

The Lord has established the law of tithing and the law of the fast, which includes fast offerings, to bless His people (see Isaiah 58:6–12; Malachi 3:8–12). Fast offerings are used exclusively to meet welfare needs.

The bishop, with the assistance of the ward council, teaches all members the importance of living these laws. He also teaches about

the Lord's promises to those who live these laws. These promises include feeling closer to the Lord and greater compassion for others. The Lord also promises increased spiritual strength, improved temporal well-being, and a stronger desire to serve.

In some areas of the world, bishops' storehouses are available to provide food and clothing. Where a bishops' storehouse is not available, fast offerings are used to provide food and clothing. They are also used for shelter, medical assistance, and other life-sustaining aid.

The Church General Welfare Committee establishes the maximum amount a bishop may pay

for a needy member's medical expenses without additional authorization. When fast offerings are used, medical care should be obtained at a nearby, suitable medical facility.

There is no requirement that fast-offering expenditures remain in balance with fast-offering contributions.

Welfare assistance is for Church members and generally is funded by fast-offering donations. The Church's humanitarian assistance is for people of all faiths and generally is funded by humanitarian donations.

STAKE AND OTHER CHURCH RESOURCES

The bishop may call on stake specialists, Church employment centers, bishops' storehouses, Deseret Industries, and LDS Family Services to assist members in need when such resources are available.

NON-CHURCH RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO HELP THE POOR

Members may choose to use resources in the community, including government resources, to meet their basic needs. The bishop should become familiar with these resources. They may include:

- Hospitals, physicians, or other sources of medical care.
- Job training and placement services.
- Help for people with disabilities.
- Professional counselors or social workers.
- Addiction treatment services.

Even when Church members receive assistance from non-Church sources, the bishop should help them avoid becoming dependent on these sources.

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Matthew 25:35–36, 40

This booklet is a summary of basic welfare principles and elements of self-reliance for priesthood and Relief Society leaders. Additional information is available in *Providing in the Lord's Way: A Leader's Guide to Welfare*, available through Church Distribution Services. See also providentliving.org.

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Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Salt Lake City, Utah

*O*ur primary purpose was to set up . . . 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 re-enthroned as the ruling principle
of the lives of our Church membership.

The First Presidency, in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, 3

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