



Pioneer



Sacrifices



By Elder M. Russell Ballard
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Did you know that Elder M. Russell Ballard likes to repair things? Both of his grandfathers were also Apostles. He speaks often of his love for his pioneer ancestors:

Many of us are descendants of hardy pioneers, and we feel grateful and inspired by their faith-promoting examples of sacrifice. My great-grandmother, Margaret McNeil Ballard, recorded in her journal a pioneer experience of sacrifice that occurred when she was between nine and eleven years of age. [She had come from Scotland by boat with her family.] She wrote:

“After landing we planned to go west to Utah. . . . The company we were assigned to had gone on ahead and as my mother was anxious for me to go with them she strapped my little brother James on my back with a shawl. He was only four years old and . . . quite sick with the measles; but I took him since my mother had all she could do to care for the other children. I hurried and caught up with the company, traveling with them all day. That night a kind lady helped me take my brother off my back. I sat up and held him on my lap with the shawl wrapped around him, alone, all night. He was a little better in the morning. The people in the camp were very good to us and gave us a little fried bacon and some bread for breakfast.

“We traveled this way for about a week, before my brother and I were united with our family again.”

This brief episode in Great-grandmother’s life teaches me that our

pioneer ancestors gave everything, even their lives, for their faith, for the building of the kingdom of God when the Church was in its infancy. It teaches also that they helped, nourished, and strengthened each other. . . . Their . . . love for one another and their devotion to their Lord and to the gospel were boundless.

Our commitment to the kingdom should match that of our faithful ancestors even though our sacrifices are different. . . . Today we are not called to pull handcarts through the snow-swept plains of Wyoming. However, we are called to live, foster, and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is our privilege to invest our means and our time to bless others.

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