

SANDY UTAH WILLOW CREEK STAKE CONFERENCE  
ADULT SESSION SATURDAY  
September 8, 2018  
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM  
2350 E Creek Road, Sandy UT 84093

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Presiding:            President **Joseph A. Staples**  
Conducting:         President **Davis Smith**  
Organist:            Sister **Megan Johnson**  
Chorister:          Sister **Glenda Gleave**

Welcome and announcements by **President Smith**

Opening Hymn: **Have I Done Any Good? Hymn, #223**

Invocation: **Sarah Hopkin (3rd Ward RS 2nd Counselor)**

**President Alan Matheson:**

- I.     **Introduction** On August 5<sup>th</sup>, all of the Relief Society classes and Elders Quorums dedicated their Council to a discussion of questions presented by the Stake Presidency to better understand the feelings, experiences and needs of the 30-somthings in the stake. We have reviewed the notes from those councils. They are full of insight and wisdom, all clearly motivated by charity. As we read through the notes during a Stake Council meeting, I was particularly struck by the diversity of ideas:
- More classes and special meetings vs. simplify and hold fewer meetings
  - The Church should provide more opportunities for social interaction vs. the Church is to satisfy spiritual needs and individuals are responsible to create their own social opportunities.
  - Some feel accepted vs. some feel misunderstood
  - Church adds stress vs. Church brings peace
  - Feel the Spirit when teaching the gospel to kids, in meetings without kids, in the temple, during ordinances, in nature, during difficult times, etc.

I wondered how we as a stake can address such individualized experiences and diverse, even contradictory needs. Then I had a moment of epiphany and clarity: That's why there is a renewed emphasis on ministering. Here is an approach that allows us to know individuals, understand their needs and challenges, and recognize and respond to what is happening in their lives in real time. Done right, ministering helps tailor the gospel to each of Heavenly Father's wonderfully divergent children.

## II. Christ's Example of Ministering

"[T]he Son of man come not to be ministered unto, but to minister." [Matt 20:28]

And how did He minister? Two examples:

- 1) The streets of the Holy Land at the time of Christ were not like the streets we walk today. They were dusty and packed with animals and people. Not regularly cleaned. As Christ, the purest, most noble soul who ever lived, gathered his disciples in the upper room, "he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. . . .So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." (John 13: 4-15)

- Humility – willing to do the menial tasks
- Put needs of others ahead of own
- *Initiated* the service, didn't wait to be asked
- Taught gospel principles through the service

- 2) Woman at the Well [John 4: 5-29]

- Although tired, the Savior reached out to the woman
- V. 9 "Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, asketh drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." *Not deterred by political or cultural differences. Cared for her as individual. Taught one on one.*
- "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." *Taught in the moment, drawing on immediate circumstances.*
- "Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he who thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." *Christ knew the woman and the details of her life. Showed he cared.*
- "The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he." *Christ testified of truth, shared words that blessed and redeemed her life.*

## III. Modern Examples

During a temple recommend interview a couple of weeks ago, a single woman told me she did not like the change from home and visiting teaching to ministering. She said, “I used to have people visit me. I got nice lessons. The priesthood was in my home regularly. Now, it doesn’t happen.” That clearly reflects a misunderstanding of ministering. While a periodic text may suffice for some, it is woefully inadequate for others. Our ministering has to be tailored to the needs of the individuals we serve.

- Mary Ellen Edmunds: Sister Edmunds’ friend was very sick. She was at home alone when someone knocked on her door. She didn’t feel like getting up, but the knocking continued. Then she realized that it might be her visiting teachers. She knew that they had set a goal of 100 percent visits, and it was near the end of the month. When she saw that indeed it was her visiting teachers, she began to feel hopeful. She had a lot of undone work around her apartment. Perhaps, she thought, they might see how sick she was and offer to help. When they saw her and asked if she was all right, her hopes increased. “I’ve been so sick,” she said. “Well,” they replied, “we’ll just give you a quick lesson so you can get back to bed.” They gave her the lesson, left, and got “credit” for their visit. The sick woman went back to bed and wept. She thought of times when she, too, had missed opportunities to serve because she was not as sensitive as she could have been.

Ministering is not about checking a box. It’s about true charity, refining our character, and being Christ’s hands to heal to physically, emotionally and spiritually infirm.

- Sister Cieko Okazaki, former member of the General Relief Society Presidency, tells of a visiting teaching experience. One day she felt impressed to call a sister to ask how she was doing. The sister’s reply was, “All right.” Not leaving it at that, Sister Okazaki then asked if she would like her to come and visit with her, and the sister said, “Yes.” Upon arriving at her friend’s home, she found the woman discouraged and disoriented. Apparently she had taken an overdose of medication. Sister Okazaki prepared a meal, took her hand and spoke with her, and stayed with her until she felt it was safe to leave her alone. Because she had often prayed for her friend, Sister Okazaki heard the Spirit’s voice and responded to it.
- A woman lost five close family members from another state in a fiery automobile accident. She herself was struggling to absorb the news, trying to pack for her own little family to leave the following day for the funeral. A good friend and neighbor arrived at her door with the announcement that he had come to clean their shoes. She had not even thought about shoes. He knelt on their kitchen floor with a pan of soapy water, a sponge, shoe polish, and a brush and soon had everyday shoes and Sunday shoes gleaming and spotless. He quietly slipped away when he finished, leaving the shoes ready to pack; even the soles were washed.

The mother says, “Now whenever I hear of an acquaintance who has lost a loved one, I no longer call with the vague offer, ‘If there’s anything I can do. . .’ Now I try to think of one specific task that suits that person’s need – such as washing the family car, taking the dog to the boarding kennel, or house-sitting during the funeral. And if the person says to me, ‘How did you know I needed that done’ I reply, “It’s because a man once cleaned my shoes.”



### **A Simple Vision**

The world is complex and complicated. The gospel is not. Let’s keep the concept of ministering simple. The guidebook is found in Matthew 22: 37-39: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. “

Each of us is unique. Thank the Lord for that! Our experiences are different. Our talents vary. Our interests are not the same. We learn and feel in different ways. Therefore, our needs differ. What we do share is human frailty and the challenges and burdens of mortality. Although the details may vary, we all struggle, we all fall a little short, we all have those quiet moments of doubt and desperation. We need each other. None of us succeeds alone. A shared burden is lighter. We must tailor our service to individuals, always seeking divine guidance from Him who knows His children best.

In keeping with the theme of simple service, James 1:27 says, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction,” and, may I add, to visit the different, the lonely, the aged and tired, the overwhelmed young mother, the ostracized child, the insecure teen, those adjusting to a newly empty nest, the stressed father, those wrestling with faith, anguished parents of a wayward child. In short, pure religion is to visit and minister to *all*. May we help each other – regardless of race, gender, orthodoxy, politics, interests, background or station – through the journey of life, the journey of faith that, in the beautiful words of Mosiah, we may have our “hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another. [Mos. 18:21]

Musical Number: **John, Margie, and Caroline Murdock (1st Ward)**

Accompanied by: **Megan Johnson**

Ministering Panel discussion lead by President Matheson included **Ron Fletcher (3rd Ward Empty Nest Coordinator); Loren Kanzler (SA Ward EQ President); Jen Ashworth, Dawnie Elzinga, and Katie Tatton (2nd Ward RS Presidency)**

Closing Remarks: **President Staples**

Closing Hymn: **Let the Holy Spirit Guide**, Hymn #143

Closing Prayer: **Reid Monson** (1st Ward Sunday School Teacher)