

The Aaronic Priest

The Office of Priest

INTRODUCTION:

Christ's Church and His priesthood in these latter days must parallel and adhere to the commandments, standards, and pattern of His Church as established in His own days on earth and restored through the prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. The expectations of priesthood, the way priesthood members are called, and the need for priesthood's authoritative ordination reveal but a glimpse into the mind and will of the Father for the greater good of His Church.

INTRODUCTION:

The structure and overall nature of priesthood reflect His wisdom and commission for us today. The Aaronic priesthood is by design a preparatory priesthood that continues and abides forever, along with the “greater priesthood.” As evidenced in the wisdom of the Lord, ordinances established by Christ himself allow the power of godliness to be manifest to us in the flesh, and enable man to behold the face of God and live (D&C 83:3). In this process, the role of the Aaronic priest cannot be overlooked in the accomplishment of His work, as it educates, supports, and makes ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:17).

INTRODUCTION:

Of necessity and in perfect harmony with the order of priesthood is the office of Aaronic priest. Without this office and the proper performance of the duties of the priest, the church would suffer tremendously. The priest must be aware of the duties and responsibilities of his office and must commit to a life of service in the fulfilling of this calling.

Lesson 1 Unit 1 - The Nature of Priesthood

Being commissioned of Jesus Christ and acting with authority as a member of His priesthood is an awe-inspiring task. This responsibility is not to be taken lightly nor undertaken by one's own whim or personal desire. Briefly stated, **men are called to priesthood office through a divine calling from God.** A frequently cited reference related to this is found in the New Testament book of Hebrews:

Hebrews 5:4 And no man taketh this honor unto himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

Although in context, this reference is applied specifically to the High Priesthood, it is true for all who are called.

Lesson 1 Unit 1 - The Nature of Priesthood

The process of calling and ordaining a man to priesthood looks the same throughout the church but may have slight nuances depending on the situation. Through avenues such as testimony, vision, or voice, God may reveal a priesthood call to a Presiding Elder or Pastor. When this call is authoritatively received by a pastor (or perhaps other elders if in an unorganized area), and is presented to and accepted by the candidate, approval must be given by the body of members to which the candidate will serve. Once this call, acceptance, and approval take place, the candidate may be ordained by those with the authority to do so. In the case of the Aaronic Priest, he may be ordained by someone holding the Melchisedec Priesthood or by another Aaronic Priest.

D&C 17:12 a,b Every elder, priest, teacher, or deacon is to be ordained according to the gifts and callings of God unto him; and he is to be ordained by the power of the Holy Ghost which is in the one who ordains him.

Lesson 1 Unit 1 - The Nature of Priesthood

D&C 17:16a No person is to be ordained to any office in this church, where there is a regularly organized branch of the same, without the vote of that church.

Mosiah 11:17-20 And now Alma was their high priest, he being the founder of their church. And it came to pass that none received authority to preach or to teach, except it were by him from God. Therefore he consecrated all their priests, and all their teachers, and none were consecrated except they were just men. Therefore they did watch over their people, and did nourish them with things pertaining to righteousness.

Alma 4:1 And now it came to pass that after Alma had made an end of speaking unto the people of the church, which was established in the city of Zarahemla, he ordained priests and elders, by laying on his hands according to the order of God, to preside and watch over the church.

Lesson 1 Unit 1 - The Nature of Priesthood

Each priesthood member is recognized in their office within the branch where he was approved. Although this authority may be granted and ordination be done locally within a branch, this authority is regarded as carrying on to all branches of the Church insomuch as they too accept that call and ordination.

Ordained members of the priesthood should carry certification (card) with them as they travel to branches that may not be familiar with their credentials or standing. When moving or relocating to a different branch, a certificate verifying this authority may be provided/requested by the new branch. Circumstances or situations may arise where a man's office may not be accepted in another branch. Though disapproval is not common, a vetting process is part of the rights of every congregation in acceptance of that man to serve in that particular branch in the office to which he was ordained.

Lesson 1 Unit 2. The Priest's place in the Church -Authority and duty

*Ephesians 4 states that the priesthood is called to the work of the perfecting of the saints until everyone comes to the perfect knowledge of Jesus Christ. In order to fulfill this calling, God has ordained both Melchisedec and Aaronic priesthood for the edifying of the body of Christ. Each office of priesthood has its own calling and authority, but at the same time the priesthood is also one body. The priesthood offices often overlap each other to form a link in a chain, and yet each office has its own part to play in the perfecting of the saints. (*Elder Andrew King class notes on "The Office of Priest")

D&C 83:21a,b Therefore, let every man stand in his own office, and labor in his own calling; and let not the head say unto the feet it hath no need of the feet, for without the feet how shall the body be able to stand? Also, the body hath need of every member, that all may be edified together, that the system may be kept perfect.

Lesson 1 Unit 2. The Priest's place in the Church -Authority and duty

The ministry of the Aaronic priest brings members and families to a higher spiritual plane through the temporal nature of its duties. This temporal ministry is considered a preparatory ministry and essential for the development from the milk level to the meat level. This in no way diminishes the importance of this authority. Note the similarities in sections 104 and 83 in the Doctrine and Covenants as it pertains to the Aaronic (lesser) priesthood

D&C 104:10 The power and authority of the lesser, or Aaronic, priesthood is to **hold the keys of the ministering of angels** and to administer in outward ordinance-**the letter of the gospel-the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins**

D&C 83:4c Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst and the holy priesthood also; and the lesser priesthood continued, which priesthood **holdeth the key of the ministering of angels** and the preparatory gospel, **which gospel is the gospel of repentance, and of baptism, and the remission of sins, and the law of carnal commandments,**

Lesson 1 Unit 2. The Priest's place in the Church -Authority and duty

Proper attention to these and other duties of the priest results in a vibrant and ready people. More on the specific duties of the priest will come in Unit 2, although it is important to note that the priest takes on a pastoral role, a shepherding role, and a missionary role as circumstances and fulfillment of duties require.

As Christ embodied the Good Shepherd, so should His priesthood, in pastoral fashion, shepherd the flocks entrusted to our care. To be the protecting door of the fold, to search for the one lost from the ninety and nine, to recognize and know the sheep, to be mindful, watchful, and willing to sacrifice for the members of the church as the shepherd would for his sheep. This is part of our calling as a standing minister in a branch. We will see the importance of this as we progress through our unit on the priest and Home Ministry.

Yet the ministry of the priest often moves him in a missionary endeavor beyond the branch. Section 83:22 recognizes that the priest should travel in what might encompass not only a greater pastoral work for the church at large, but also in a missionary fashion to preach and spread the gospel. In assisting the elder as occasion arises, there may be times when the work takes the priest to the missionary field. Section 83:20 instructs us that this lesser priesthood may be called on to go before the elders to make appointments, and to prepare the way, and if need be to fill the appointments as they travel in places for the purpose of building up His church unto Him.

Lesson 1 Unit 3. Ministerial Ethics – Code of Conduct

The call to priesthood demands the sanctification of our lives in discipleship. Because it encompasses a legal, moral, and spiritual authority, it demands that the priest present himself as a clean vessel in all walks of life. We should be expected to be different from the world that we live in. There should be a glow in our countenance as we make ourselves ready to give an answer for the joy and hope that we have in the gospel. Every office of priesthood, as well as every member should work together in this process of perfecting the Saints.

Lesson 1 Unit 3. Ministerial Ethics – Code of Conduct

*The priesthood [has] a calling to be a servant of God in all places and at all times. The priesthood is called to stand in the stead of Jesus Christ and to emulate His light to the world. This high calling requires each individual to learn his duty, magnify his office, and labor with all his might, and yet, we also know that we are more than a single person, but we are a brotherhood with the united purpose of lifting the saints to higher ground until everyone comes to a perfect knowledge of Jesus Christ. Every office of priesthood has a role in this edification. (*A. King)

Consequently, every priest should be guided by a moral compass that finds its bearing grounded in scripture and tended by the Good Spirit. Our conscience often presents a good emotional target for our conduct, but that approach alone may not unify us as a priesthood in our actions and lifestyles.

Attempts have been made to establish a Code of Conduct that might fit or perhaps create a mold that every priesthood member might use as a checklist for personal behavior and living. Even with this approach, the Church has wrestled with interpretations and understanding of a basic plan for such a code. Here we present a few samples of Codes of Conduct that the Church has shared over the years.

Lesson 1 Unit 3. Ministerial Ethics – Code of Conduct

The following excerpt is from a study called The Priest in Family Ministry by L. F. P. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Counselor to Frederick M Smith...

The man who accepts ordination to an order of the priesthood thereby assumes a solemn obligation and a divine trust, and it becomes his duty at all times to uphold the standards set by the church and observed by his predecessors and brother ministers. Under all circumstances the men of the priesthood should conduct themselves as Christian gentlemen. The private life of a member of the priesthood cannot be separated from the sacred call of his office.

It is incumbent upon each man of the priesthood to set a high standard of speech and conduct, and to be scrupulously honest, careful in incurring financial obligations, and prompt in the payment of debts.

Brother LFP Curry continues by giving “A POSSIBLE CODE OF ETHICS”

A POSSIBLE CODE OF ETHICS: LFP Curry (Each man must decide on his own code of ethics, following the dictates of his own mind and heart after careful consideration of his responsibilities and relationships to his God and his sheep.)

General: *I have accepted the call to a priesthood office with full knowledge that I have been called to represent the Christ among the people of this earth; having been given the commission to proclaim the gospel as I understand it now, continuing to search for new truths that will direct my actions and ministry in the future. Therefore, I voluntarily adopt the following principles in order that through dedication and self-discipline I may set a more worthy example for those whom I seek to lead and serve.*

1. My Personal Conduct:

- I will cultivate my devotional life, continuing steadfastly in reading the scriptures, meditation and prayer.*
- I will endeavor to keep physically and emotionally fit for my work.*
- I will be fair to my family and will endeavor to give them the time and consideration to which they are entitled.*
- I will endeavor to live within my income and will not carelessly leave unpaid debts behind me.*
- I will strive to grow in my work through comprehensive reading and careful study.*
- I will be honest in my stewardship of money, time and talents.*
- I will seek to be Christlike in my personal attitudes and conduct toward all people regardless of race, class or creed.*

A POSSIBLE CODE OF ETHICS: LFP Curry

2. My Relationship to the Church in which I serve:

- I will become familiar with the World Church programs and will support to the best of my understanding and ability.*
- I will dedicate a reasonable amount of time and energy to my Christian ministry and will maintain a high standard of discipline.*
- I will maintain a Christian attitude toward other members of the church and will not expect the unreasonable from them.*
- As a pastor to the people, I will have respect for every home I enter for I am a representative of Christ and the Church.*
- I will under no circumstances violate confidences that come to me as a minister.*
- In my pastoral duties I will be impartial so no one can say that I am pastor to only the select few.*
- I will strive to strengthen the Saints wherever I will find them; by encouraging them to worship and in righteous living.*

A POSSIBLE CODE OF ETHICS: LFP Curry

3. My Relationship to Fellow Ministers:

- I will seek to serve my fellow ministers and their families in every way possible.*
- I will refrain from speaking disparagingly about the work of my fellow ministers; nor will I gossip about others.*
- I will never embarrass a fellow minister by meddling in his ministerial affairs.*
- I will consider all ministers my co-laborers in the work of Christ and even though I may differ from them I shall respect their Christian earnestness and sincerity.*

Each member of the priesthood receives his call from God, but he receives his commission through the church; the church by vote sanctions his ordination, and if he ever forfeits the confidence and respect of the people this commission is in jeopardy.

The church expects a man to keep the obligations of his priesthood, and do his utmost to magnify his calling before the body of Christ. If untrue to these obligations by moral delinquency or by failing to respond to the sacred call, he should surrender his commission to the church.

Lesson 1 Unit 3 Ministerial Ethics

D&C 38:9 commands... be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.

A priest should therefore zealously guard his character and reputation and should as much as possible avoid even the appearance of evil. Personal cleanliness in both appearance and speech are expected. Faithful attendance and attention to study are required. Stewardship and sound financial practice are essential as he models such behavior among the membership.

Curry also writes in the same lesson...

On Being A Minister (L.F.P. Curry)

To Be An Effective Minister One Must:

A. Be a Believer

- 1. Believe in God*
- 2. Believe in the church*
- 3. Believe in the program of the church*
- 4. Believe in the strength and ability of the Saints and of the priesthood*
- 5. Believe in himself*
- 6. Believe that righteousness will win*

On Being A Minister (L.F.P. Curry)

To Be An Effective Minister One Must:

B. Have An Inner Drive

- 1. Motivations must run deep. An over-active thyroid will never compensate for deep conviction about one's call, and sense of mission.*
- 2. Develop the habit of positive and vigorous approach to opportunities*
- 3. Develop genuine love for those in your care*
- 4. Inner drive comes from:*
 - a. A sense of direction*
 - b. A sense of obligation*
 - c. A sense of faith*
 - d. A desire to do right and do well*

C. Set Up Sound Priorities

- 1. Develop the ability to pick the important things for vigorous action*
 - a. Do the difficult and important task first*
 - b. Don't put off the unpleasant jobs*
- 2. Make worthy commitments and keep them without fail*

On Being A Minister (L.F.P. Curry)

To Be An Effective Minister One Must:

D. Have A Desire to excel

- 1. It takes a little more to do the job First Class*
- 2. Sound goals point to the need for a sound plan of action*
- 3. A sound plan of action points to the need for adequate manpower*
- 4. Adequate manpower and mutual support brings enthusiasm and helps achieve success.*

On Being A Minister (L.F.P. Curry)

To Be An Effective Minister One Must:

E. Be Free

1. A man loses his freedom when he:

- A. Gets in debt*
- B. strays from the truth*
- C. Over-commits his time and resources*
- D. Becomes negative*
- E. Loses the team spirit*
- F. Spreads gossip*

2. We need to be free from:

- A. Fear*
- B. Jealousy*
- C. Self-pity*
- D. Prejudice*
- E. Trivia*

3. We need to be free for:

- A. Prophetic understanding*
- B. Witnessing testimony*
- C. Effective planning*
- D. Recruiting and training leadership*
- E. Inspiring and motivating our people*
- F. Leading men to God*

On Being A Minister (L.F.P. Curry)

To Be An Effective Minister One Must:

F. Be Professional, Therefore he needs to:

- 1. Look good (so dress well and appropriately)*
- 2. Be heard (so speak well)*
- 3. Be read (so write well)*
- 4. Be informed (so listen well)*
- 5. Be a leader (so plan well)*
- 6. Be successful (profit by your experience and experience of others)*
- 7. Be happy (so do the difficult first)*

G. Be A Godly Man

- 1. Pray often about matters that are significant*
- 2. Study*
- 3. Weed out the clutter of unproductive activity*
- 4. Build serenity and a sense of well being in your home*
- 5. Take time often to let your mind dwell on the solemnities of God that your life may be reordered, strengthened and refreshed.*

Lesson 1 Unit 3. Ministerial Ethics – Code of Conduct

There is a discussion on the Standards of Priesthood contained in The Priesthood Journal (1934, volume 1, number 1 pp 24-28) In this discussion, President F. M. McDowell wrote on The Church Program For Priesthood.

Included in this work is a lesson on standards for members and for priesthood. For further study, refer to that document [Standards of Priesthood - D Joyce.docx](#)

This particular document includes:

- Standards developed in the 1932 General Conference,
- the KC Stake interpretation of 1932 conference statement,
- the Des Moines pledge regarding 1932 Conference statement.

LESSON 1 RESOURCES:

- * Elder Andrew King, Class on The Office of Priest
- * L.F.P. Curry, The Priest in Family Ministry Lesson 1
- *Priesthood Journal vol 1 number 1 (July 1934) pp. 24 – 28 Standards of Priesthood
including the following discussion regarding:
 - 1.1932 General Conference statement on standards
 - 2.KC Stake interpretation of 1932 conference statement
 - 3.Des Moines regarding 1932 Conference statement

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry



Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

Everything that the ministry of both the Aaronic and the Melchisedec priesthoods are engaged in must be **grounded in the principles of the Kingdom**. We do not strive out on our own nor accede to the whims and customs of society simply for the sake of conformity or experimentation. The scriptures record examples and instruction on how and why we minister the way we do. What Jesus taught the disciples in his day, as well as what we have been taught in our day through revelation, form the basis of our ministry.

In a study of the meaning and methods of ministry, we address three key avenues or sources which are readily available to us.

- I. Instruction to the priesthood/ministry as taught by Christ
 - A. Meaning of his ministry
 - B. Broad principles of his ministry
- II. Latter-day instruction to the priesthood
 - Visit homes, teach, exhort
- III. Procedure in the practice of priesthood work/ministry

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

** (Much of what follows in this lesson and unit is adapted from L.F.P. Curry, The Priest in Family Ministry)

Few unique organizations have ever been formed than that of the Master as he prepared men to carry on the work he was instituting. The record indicates plainly that these men had basic ability, sturdiness of character, and a reasonable grounding in the Jewish teachings. As fishermen, tax gatherers, and workers in other vocations not necessarily requiring special mental powers, they were inducted into a program where clear thinking and firm action were necessities. In subsequent centuries, their names have become household words, and the work they did after the Master's return to heaven, as far as we have record, was most significant.

But the Master did not send them forth as his representatives until he had given them a careful grounding in the principles of the kingdom of heaven. He taught them the meaning and methods of ministry. It is plain that during the three years they spent with the Master, they did not always understand him. But following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the experience of their ministry independent of the Master, they came to a broader understanding.

These men had gone forth preaching and teaching and healing. In this work they were very greatly blessed...In their experience while on missionary work away from the Master's side, the power which attended them gave evidence that although the Master was separate from them, they were sustained by the same power which he exercised; and he in spirit was present with them. They realized then, as does anyone now who humbly ministers in Christ's power and name instead of in his own authority, how wonderful are the words, "Lo, I am with you always."

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

I. Instruction to the priesthood/ministry as taught by Christ

A. Meaning of his ministry

Christ was very careful to fully instruct the disciples who were to be his ministers. They were in the crowds with him on the seashore, they were with him on the mountain top, they attended him day by day.

It is seen that Christ's *first step* was to teach his disciples the law of sainthood and other aspects of the kingdom at the same time that he taught the people.

What we will focus on is his *second step*... **to prepare the disciples in the meaning and methods of ministry**. In doing so, he gave them vital and comprehensive instruction, plain and practical, adapted to their understanding.

An outline of this element of his instruction is what will be presented in this unit.

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

In teaching the meaning of ministry, the Master showed these men that the purpose of ministry at all times is **to help people**. Ministerial authority was conferred, not to give them prominence personally and to reflect worldly honor upon them nor to lead to positions of power in the community, but first and last, to help the people to whom they were sent to recognize their sin, the need for repentance, the possibilities of betterment, and the path which might be followed to nobler living.

The key to success in presenting his message lay in teaching the people. There was no place for oratory, political expediency, or riotous uprising. Jesus was inexorably compelled to teach. Three factors were found in the teaching situation not unlike those we encounter today.

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

The people Jesus and the disciples encountered were a people in need of:

1. Spiritual instruction

First, he found indeed a people whose **spiritual need** was great. Their knowledge of Jewish law, custom and tradition centuries of misguidance had obscured the real purpose of religious life. These people needed a reawakening, a fresh introduction to God as a loving Father, a revised conception of the purposes of God in a changing world. Christ set himself of supplying this need.

2. A priesthood ministry divinely called to minister to the need

Christ stood with a heavenly call to ministry. But he was faced with the necessity almost from the first of **preparing a whom he called to carry on his work as ministers in his stead**. Perceiving that the total time allotted to his ministry was limited, he realized how important it was that this training of co-workers be speedy.

3. Teaching material devised to meet the apparent need

The Master drew heavily upon the literature of the Old Testament. At times we may tend to think of Christ as having a completely original manner in his ministry. Truly there was a great originality in his point of view and methods of presentation, but it is almost amazing to note how constantly he quoted from what we know as the Old Testament. We find in the teachings of Christ the abiding principles of spiritual life clearly presented, lighted up by illustrations exceedingly well chosen, and made abundantly clear by the example of the teacher himself.

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

Christ, as spiritual teacher and leader, and for a time the only minister, performed a unique service in preparing the disciples for their ministry. By his teachings, he broadened their understanding of the kingdom after he had introduced its principles. Under his careful supervision they, in turn, gained experience in teaching others what they had learned.

By his resurrection, Christ proved the ultimate supremacy of God. Additionally, the supremacy of the Father was later shown by the baptism of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost and the Spirit's presence at other subsequent times. Here was the comforting assurance of his abiding presence; here the daily guide as they proceeded with the work to which he had appointed them.

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

B. Broad principles of his ministry

As Christ by verbal instruction and example instructed the disciples in the meaning of ministry, he likewise carefully introduced them to **the broad principles of the ministry** to which they were called.

1. His was a **comprehensive personal ministry**. His ministry was to the sinner and the righteous man, the rich and the poor; the diseased were pitied and healed; the hopeless were revived and given new courage and light; people of faith in truth and beauty and godliness were strengthened in their faith.

Such ministry was not to people gathered in synagogues or other places of worship; rather, the disciples were to go from house to house teaching the people the good news of the gospel message. Salvation was not the right of the few, or restricted to the Hebrew people, but was possible to all men everywhere, whatever their race or condition.

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

2. A spiritual ministry was involved. His teaching included that the disciples were to take no thought for material things. The content of their teaching was spiritual and their sustenance as laborers in the kingdom of God likewise was a spiritual concern to the Father.

The spiritual objective they were to keep in mind was to seek first to build up the kingdom of God and establish his righteousness.

3. Christ set up basic teaching which focused upon the heart of the people's need.

The cry of repentance was foremost. Next in the setting up of basic teaching materials was the outlining of the laws of the kingdom as found in Matthew, chapters 5 and 6. In effect, the Master said to the people, "You have sinned, you must repent. But here is the way to lead a good life. "

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

4. Primary guides to effective teaching were presented by the Master. "Now these are the words which Jesus taught his disciples that they should say unto the people" (Matt. 7:1). The guides are as follows:

- They were to render righteous judgment
- They were not to criticize others when they themselves were unclean
- They were to obey the law they taught. The "don't do as I do, but as I say" school of thought was not popular with Christ.
- He taught the disciples that they must observe the law of spiritual growth. This law is that repentance comes first and then growth. As they groping their way toward God should be given spiritual food in conformity with their need and capacity to receive. The mysteries of the kingdom are not to be given to those who as yet are unable to understand. Understanding this is of great importance in the ministry of the Priest and the preparatory gospel.
- Christ covered the point of what to do if people would not hear the disciple's words. They were warned that teachers were to be known by their fruits, and in this there could be no deception practiced. Through the experience of being rejected in attempted ministry, the disciple grows and becomes spiritually mature as he humbly meets success and defeat.

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

5. Although some may think that righteousness may be attained by preparing and following a list of the attributes of righteous living, the disciples knew that it must become intrinsically part of them.

Christ did not write a creed; he taught the way of life from life itself. His instruction often emphasized a righteousness of the heart and not of the letter.

In the home, parents must teach their children the manners and customs of successful living together. Manners and customs are the skeletal structure upon which the finer aspects of life depend. One important duty of the priest is to inspire and lead the way to the true inner righteousness which guides the thoughts and actions of a sanctified and growing family toward the righteousness which Christ made a central objective of his kingdom. Manners and customs are but a means to a glorified end.

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

Christ's instilled a foundation for ministry for the personal preparation of the disciple and minister, and he supplied the r and methods for this ministry.

The foundation laid by him applies to family ministry as much as to pulpit ministry. The one is not to be considered as ap the other, but rather an extension of the other.

It is extremely important to absorb the elements of the foundation Christ had laid, otherwise there can be no complete understanding of the priest's place in the church.

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

II. Latter-day instruction to the priesthood

Although instruction to the priesthood at the time of the Restoration was rather brief, that which was presented (Doctrine and Covenants 17:10) was very valuable. The key words for the instruction concerning home ministry are words of **action** and **not of contemplation**.

They are "visit," "teach," "exhort."

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Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

Visit the house of each member.

This rule reflects the wisdom of Christ. Person to person teaching is seldom excelled for effectiveness. The end which Christ had in view, in building the kingdom of heaven and of Zion, could not be attained except by each individual and family having a complete understanding of the project.

The visit to the home does not always require formality but does require contact. In fact, the visits in the home should probably stress informality, so that reservations in the family are set aside, minds are friendly and open, and the meeting of mind with mind is freely possible. But, since the church as a whole is represented in the home by the visiting officer, informality must never verge on familiarity.

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

Visit the house of each member.

If at all possible, the visit to the home should be made "two by two. This is a safe procedure. The priest should be accompanied by another priest (one whom by prearrangement takes the lead), or by a teacher. There is value in this procedure in almost every instance of home visitation, but especially so when an unattended woman occupant of the home is visited.

It is not well for the priest's wife to participate in his official work. Rarely should exceptions to this practice occur. The priest, if accompanied by his wife, may make social calls upon families to which he is assigned, but he must not be confused about the nature of this call. It must be social and not official. The priest emphatically is not at liberty to confide in his wife respecting his official work. To do so will create lack of confidence in his official capacity, and ultimately tend to weaken or destroy his ministry.

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

Visit the house of each member.

One of the purposes in family contact is to establish friendships. Seldom is a stranger influential in home ministry. He may be welcomed, he may be respected, he may have authority, but there is an unspoken reservation in accepting him or his recommendation. But the influence of a friend is effective immediately and continues after the visit is over.

In the establishment of friendships, contacts should be unhurried, relaxed, and easy. Tension, insistence, or pressure do not tend to establish friendship. The contact should be purposeful. There should be a reason for each contact. Tact and courtesy must be observed always, and frequency must be sufficiently guarded that the priest's coming is welcome. Visiting which becomes subject to criticism is a disaster. The contact to establish friendship must be made because of a love for the family and a desire to help them in their spiritual growth. Love is the root of the kingdom, and without love the kingdom cannot exist. The instruction at the time of the Restoration on this point reads (Doctrine and Covenants 11:4), "No one can assist in this work, except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things whatsoever shall be entrusted to his care. "

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

Teach

The instruction to visit the house of each member implies visiting with a purpose. Part of the purpose is found in the meaning of the word "teach." It is the duty of the priest to teach the family what that particular family needs to know for a high type of Christian family living.

Some things that address what and how the priest should teach are listed below:

1. Teach the family about **the law of sainthood**. If the priest himself is full to overflowing with the law of the kingdom, he will not be barren or unfruitful when confronted with a family's need. The Holy Spirit can then use him.

Thus for the day by day needs of spiritual family living, as well as for the unusual and occasional problems which arise, Christ has given the answer in the law of sainthood. The priest, knowing the law and living the law in his own daily life, and guided by the Holy Spirit as he performs his family ministry will find himself able to exert spiritual leadership with the family in all of its spiritual necessities.

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

Teach

2. Teach the family about **the pastoral program** of the branch in which the family resides.

Here are some common examples:

- Financing of the branch needs

 - Budget

 - Program

- Missionary work

 - Opportunities to assist

 - Needs

- Personal witnessing

 - Instruction on how

 - Literature

- Other requirements of the kingdom

 - The need for fellowship among the Saints

 - Special services

 - Building upkeep and renovation

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

Teach

3. Teach the family that **Church exists beyond the local branch.** No matter the state of the Church, it is Christ's Church and it has faithful branches in all parts of the vineyard. The laws of the Church should be taught as far and widely as they have been given through command and as they remain applicable in every station of existence.

Stewardship

Tithing and Contributions outside of the local branch

Time, talents

Financial statements

The Gathering principle

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

Teach

Not everyone will teach the same way, nor will everyone be as adept at teaching as another.

However, the methods of teaching are almost precisely the same as those found useful in classwork in Church School, Zion's League, priesthood work, women's work, or any other group activity of the church where some subject is presented on a systematic basis. The prime difference is that family teaching should be more informal. The priest, as a friend, is presenting the material essential for family life in the course of intimate, friendly conversations whether brief or extended. He has no blackboard on which to write leading points nor has he a lesson outline. Material must come from his heart spontaneously, as need arises.

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

Exhort

The third action word of the early Restoration priesthood instruction is "**exhort**." The instruction reads, "exhort them to pray... and attend to all family duties." The meaning of this is that, once the family has been taught that which is needed for their saintly life, they are now to be urged to obey these teachings. In the priest's work, exhortation takes many forms. It may be a suggestion or strong urging to perform along the line of the teaching which has been presented.

It may be an invitation to participate in some manner of service or projects. Exhortation may take the form of warning against the results of a course of action or caution to move with care in some certain connection. Exhortation may be encouraging and inviting to do good.

No exhortation, however, is valid unless the priest has subjected himself to what he teaches. Exhortation is necessary to the work of the priest and, if fully grounded in the high example of his own life, is potent in the life of those he is called upon to lead to spiritual maturity.

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

III. Procedure in the practice of priesthood ministry

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Every priesthood visit to a home has the potential to be different from the last. It may be helpful to develop a standard procedure to make you more comfortable facing whatever situation may arise or be anticipated. Although we must stay in tune with the Spirit in each home, we should make adequate preparation for each home visit. Prior to any visit, it may be helpful to recognize:

1. The characteristics of any potential problem
2. The needs which call for ministry
3. The approach to those involved
4. Methods and helps that may be most appropriate
5. Opportunity or need for referral of the problem to others either by reporting what has been done or in asking for assistance

Lesson 2 Unit 1. The Priest Ministers: Meaning and Method of Ministry

The problems within a family that are to be met are as varied as life, and seldom are there two alike in all respects. The careful analysis of each problem will open the minds to fresh suggestions and means of ministry, and greatly assist the discharge of his stewardship. Yet he must remember that no procedure is worth a penny unless actively administered with and love.

Lesson 3 will cover examples and specifics in regard to many procedures and steps that should be taken in home ministry.

Lesson 2 Unit 2. The Priest Ministers: The Priest knows the Church

1. Language/vernacular of church

The priest must be knowledgeable regarding Christ's teachings and the role of the Church.

Christ's objective concerning the kingdom must be the objective of those who are today called to his work. God does not change. His plans continue effective until fulfilled. It follows, therefore, that no one can do anything concerning the kingdom unless he knows what Christ had in mind. This is true for the member. This is true for the priest and every other officer of the church. A smattering of information may be worse than nothing. For half-understood truths, either carelessly or earnestly used, may lead both the teacher and the taught astray. To work with Christ, to assist in establishing the kingdom, a knowledge of Christ's plans must be full, complete.

Lesson 2 Unit 2. The Priest Ministers: The Priest knows the Church

1. Language/vernacular of church

Note, as early as 1829 a revelation, given to Hyrum Smith specifically but applicable to the ministry as a whole, in D&C 10:10a-c ...”seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men. But now hold your peace; study my word which hath gone forth among the children of men, and also study my word which shall come forth among the children of men, or that which is now translating,”

Lesson 2 Unit 2. The Priest Ministers: The Priest knows the Church

1. Language/vernacular of church

Jesus' disciples did not always understand everything that he did and taught, even though they were among those closest to him. Indeed, they were often sent out with minimal training in procedure or methodology. With that, we know that they were taught in specific instances about details and mysteries of the kingdom that would carry them beyond the misunderstandings of the day.

Though led by the Spirit in our ministry, our enthusiasm to teach and minister should not overlook the basic prerequisite of presenting the message with sound use of vocabulary and content. Though it often takes a lifetime of study and experience to get a solid understanding of the nature of his work and his plan, we should always be careful in presenting the message of the church accurately in concept and in word.

Lesson 2 Unit 2. The Priest Ministers: The Priest knows the Church

1. Language/vernacular of church

There are several terms that are or should be well known in the Restoration work. There are equally many terms that have become common in other denominations and in casual context that should not find place within the ministry of the priesthood. Our speech should reflect those things that are appropriate to demonstrate a sound understanding of the principles that best reflect Christ's doctrine and His Church. Our credibility as ministers may suffer when we err in our language or choice of words.

What concepts or language might be confusing to others to whom you may minister?

Lesson 2 Unit 2. The Priest Ministers: The Priest knows the Church

1. Language/vernacular of church

To be effective as a minister for the church, it is essential that one be well acquainted with the organization of which he is a part. He should know of its origin, its history, and its present situation with regard to organization, departments, and personnel.

As you visit among the people of the church, you will frequently be asked questions about the church. In most cases, you will be able to provide the answer out of your general background of information. In some cases however, questions will be asked which will require that you do certain study. In such situations it is always well to admit frankly, that you do not have the answer at hand, but suggest that you would be happy to get the information needed and supply it to the one who wishes to know. This will provide you with two significant opportunities. First, it is a challenge to study and increase your knowledge, and second, it is an opportunity to visit in the home again and further strengthen the ties that bind the people and the priesthood together. You should be eager to supply information to the people whenever you can.

Lesson 2 Unit 2. The Priest Ministers: The Priest knows the Church

2. Church government

An area of church life which the Saints often know little about is the work of the priesthood and church governance. This is one phase of the church you are responsible for. A simple duty of the priest is to help families and members understand these things. You must be able to explain the work of your office in a way so that membership will want to use the ministry that you may be able to give to them. This is all part of the teaching task of the minister. You should also be aware that there are many members who may understand these principles far better than you may. Using their expertise is one way to include everyone in the work of the kingdom.

Teaching an understanding of the church should include those things that are scriptural in nature, but further include things that are structural and legislative. This might include tithing fundamentals, reconciliation method between members, church court procedures, etc.

Knowledge of church or branch by-laws and rules and regulations are essential. The way the church works in conjunction with local, state, and federal laws is worthy of every member's understanding.

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

In this Unit, we will discuss the following duties of the Aaronic priest:

1. Preach/Teach/expound/exhort
2. Baptize
3. Administer the Sacrament
4. Ordain priest, teachers, deacons
5. Become Branch President
6. Assist Elders
7. Visit families
8. Lead Meetings

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

When we begin to explore the duties of the priest, or any priesthood member, we should point out that it is crucial for every member, both priesthood and non-priesthood, to know their duty as members of the Church of Jesus Christ. The following two scriptures from D&C 104 and Jacob 1 discuss the duty of priesthood members:

D&C 104:44 a, b Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence. He that is slothful shall not be counted worthy to stand, and he that learns not his duty and shows himself not approved, shall not be counted worthy to stand. Even so. Amen.

Jacob 1:18-20 For I, Jacob, and my brother Joseph, had been consecrated priests, and teachers of this people by the hand of Nephi. And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads, if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; Wherefore, by laboring with our mights, their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise, their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day.

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

We often reference the duties of the priest using the scripture from D&C 17:10a-e:

D&C 17:10a The priest's duty is to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and administer the sacrament.

17:10b and visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret, and attend to all family duties:

17:10c and he may also ordain other priests, teachers, and deacons;

17:10d and he is to take the lead of meetings when there is no elder present, but when there is an elder present he is only to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and visit the house of each member, exhorting them to pray vocally and in secret, and attend to all family duties.

17:10e In all these duties the priest is to assist the elder if occasion requires.

We also note regarding marriage...

D&C 111:1 According to the custom of all civilized nations, marriage is regulated by laws and ceremonies: therefore we believe, that all marriages in this Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints should be solemnized in a public meeting, or feast, prepared for that purpose: and that the solemnization should be performed by a presiding high priest, high priest, bishop, elder, or priest, not even prohibiting those persons who are desirous to get married, of being married by other authority.

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

Preach, teach, expound, and exhort

(*the following list of definitions was provided in a class by Elder Andrew King)

Preach – to pronounce a public discourse on a religion subject, or from a subject, or from a text of Scripture. To discourse on the gospel way of salvation and exhort to repentance.

Teach – To instruct; to inform; to communicate to another the knowledge of that of which he was before ignorant. To deliver any doctrine, art, principles or words for instruction

Expound – to explain, to lay open the meaning; to clear of obscurity; to interpret; as, to expound a text of scripture; to expound a law. (To teach is to explain something they have never heard of before, while to expound is to give a greater knowledge on something they already know or something they have already heard.

Exhort – to incite by words or advice; to animate or urge by arguments to a good deed or to any laudable conduct or course of action. A challenge to live for God, or a call to action

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

baptize...

Baptism by immersion is part of a priest's responsibility to those individuals who believe in Jesus Christ, who desire to enter into a covenant with the Lord, and who are willing to witness to God that they are willing to take upon themselves the name of His Son and keep His commandments.

An example of baptism is given in the New Testament account of Jesus being baptized. Additionally, instruction on the manner of baptism is given to us in the latter days in the Doctrine and Covenants as well as the Book of Mormon. The wording of the two is worthy of comparison. The phrases "commissioned of" and "authority given" are synonymous to the point where there should be no contention. Members are baptized using either wording, though one may be preferred by the priest, elder, or candidate.

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

baptize...

D&C 17:21 Baptism is to be administered in the following manner unto all those who repent:

The person who is called of God and has authority from Jesus Christ to baptize shall

go down into the water with the person who has presented him or herself for baptism and shall say, calling him or her by name:

Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name *of the Father*, and *of the Son*, and *of the Holy Ghost*, Amen.

Then shall he immerse him or her in the water and come forth again out of the water

3 N 5:22-26 Verily I say unto you, that whoso repenteth of his through your words,

and desireth to be baptized in my name, on this wise shall baptize them: Behold, ye shall

go down and stand in the water, and in my name shall baptize them. And now behold, these are the words which shall say, calling them by name, saying:

Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name *of the Father*, and *of the Son*, and *of the Holy Ghost*. Amen.

And then shall ye immerse them in the water, and come forth again out of the water.

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

baptize...

*Elders and priests are called to expound all things concerning the Church of Jesus Christ to every member before they are confirmed into the Church and partake of the sacrament as explained in D&C 17:18a-b:

D&C 17:18 The duty of the members after they are received by baptism: The elders or priests are to have a sufficient time to expound all things concerning the church of Christ to their understanding, previous to their partaking of the sacrament, and being confirmed by the laying on of the hands of the elders; so that all things may be done in order.

Lastly, we know that we are not done after we enter into the kingdom through the waters of baptism and the laying on of hands. Instead, the priesthood, along with the members of the Church, are called to lift up and strengthen the newly baptized members (“There is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God”). (*A. King)

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

administer the sacrament...

D&C 17:10a The priest's duty is to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and administer the sacrament.

D&C 17:10e In all these duties the priest is to assist the elder if occasion requires.

D&C 17:22a It is expedient that the church meet together often to partake of bread and wine in remembrance of the Lord Jesus; and the elder or priest shall administer it...

Some members question the omission of the serving of the sacrament by a priest in the wording of section 17:10d..."when there is an elder present, he is only to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and visit the house of each member." Consequently, *the above scripture is important because some individuals may ask if a priest should be allowed to administer the sacrament when an elder is present. However, D&C 17:10e says plainly, "In all these duties (which include administering the sacrament) the priest is to assist the elder if occasion requires." If a priest may assist an elder in administering the sacrament, then obviously an elder is present. Thus, a priest can administer the sacrament if an elder is present. (*A. King)

Other questions of logistics in this and other ordinances should be addressed to avoid confusion and pitfalls. Learning on the fly by mistakes and bad experiences is not conducive to good ministry but is valuable as a lesson from those who have already been there.

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

ordain other priests, teachers, and deacons...

The authority of a priest to ordain is extended only to the ordination of other priests, teachers, or deacons. Christ ordained and gave instruction to his Nephite disciples when he was with them regarding their authority to ordain. His words were recorded several years later by Moroni. This command extends to priests who ordain as well as the elders mentioned.

Moroni 3:1-3 The manner which the disciples, who were called the elders of the church, ordained priests and teachers. After they had prayed unto the Father in the name of Christ, they laid their hands upon them, and said, *In the name of Jesus Christ I ordain you to be a priest; (or if he be a teacher, I ordain you to be a teacher) to preach repentance and remission of sins through Jesus Christ, by the endurance of faith on his name to the end. Amen.* And after this manner did they ordain priests and teachers, according to the gifts and callings of God unto men; and they ordained them by the power of the Holy Ghost, which was in them.

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

be branch president

This role of a Branch President (Pastor) should be held by a High Priest or Elder if one is able and available within a branch to be approved by the membership. However, if no Melchisedec priesthood member is present, able, or if good reason is determined to not select them as president, then a priest may be elected to that position. It should be noted that the *priest holds the responsibility of president, administratively. This does not include the functions of the Melchisedec priesthood in the ordinances which authority he does not possess as an Aaronic priest. (*Question Time Vol 2, #347)

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

In all these duties the priest is to assist the elder if occasion requires...

*In Exodus, chapter 18, Moses's father-in-law, Jethro, imparted the wisdom of the Lord to Moses. Jethro saw that Moses would wear away unless he had the assistance of other men to help him in his duties. The same can be said of the elders, or the priesthood as a whole, thus it is the duty of the priest to assist the elder if occasion requires. (*A. King)

The extent of this particular commission is vast in scope. It allows for clarification on other topics within the duties of the priest that are not expressly prohibited or mentioned.

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

Visit the house of each member, exhort them to pray vocally as well as in secret, and attend all family duties...

*The first duty for every family is to understand that Zion begins at home. Home ministry is not just for physical needs, but in particular for spiritual strengthening. For example, D&C 17:10b first commands a priest to exhort a family to pray before it mentions family duties, which by no means are exclusive to physical or temporal duties. Home ministry is crucial to building the kingdom of God, which is a spiritual condition. Above anything else, the priesthood are called to be servants of God and to stand in the stead of Jesus Christ. Only through service can the priesthood edify and work toward the perfection of the saints. Thus, if we are not living the gospel of Jesus Christ or acting in the office of our calling, how can we serve the members? (*A.King)

D&C 68:4c – and they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord.

3 Nephi 8:52 – Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed.

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

Visit the house of each member, exhort them to pray vocally as well as in secret, and attend all family duties...

Moroni 6:6-7 And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls...; And they were strict to observe that there should be no iniquity among them...

Genesis 7:23 – And the Lord called his people, Zion, because they were of one heart and of one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them.

*Out of all the duties of a priest, perhaps the most important is visiting the home of each member. The principles of the kingdom of God require that His sons and daughters be one, or they are not His (DC 38:6a). God called his people Zion, “because they were of one heart and of one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them.” Zion cannot be built up if we as body do not meet together often to strengthen one another and to talk of the welfare of our souls. The kingdom of God cannot be built without home ministry. (*A. King)

(We will explore this duty of the priest to visit in the homes in much greater detail in the following lessons.)

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

take the lead of meetings where there is no elder present...

These meetings may include preaching and worship services, prayer and testimony meetings, baptismal services, confirmation services, weddings, business meetings, sacrament services, classes, or funerals. The logistics of each of these services are important, vary in style, and demand much attention. The priest should allow the Holy Ghost to direct them in their preparation for these services as they both prepare and preside.

In the absence of an elder, the priest is the highest authority in the branch and should be prepared to act as such. It is important to understand, however, that the authority of priesthood comes from God, and that all the direction for presiding over a meeting should be blessed by the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

take the lead of meetings where there is no elder present...

When there is an elder present, priesthood members of a branch operate under the direction and authority of the presiding elder (or high priest). D&C 17:10d states...and he [the priest] is to take the lead of meetings when there is no elder present. May a priest then, be in charge of a service if an elder is present?

The interpretation of this statement has garnered much discussion over the years. Fred L Young, Church Secretary, wrote in Question Time, Vol. 3, # 205, that “there is a difference between taking the lead of a meeting and being asked to lead a meeting...there should be no doubt as to who is in charge among the priesthood if an elder and priest are both present.” Many elders believe that the Holy Ghost may lead them to designate a member of the Aaronic priesthood to take the lead of the meeting even though they remain the final voice of authority should occasion demand.

In the same volume of Question Time, question #204 states that “an elder is in charge of the meeting even though someone else is presiding...and that he does not abrogate his presiding responsibilities” even if the one in charge of the meeting is a priest.

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

The priest may perform the marriage sacrament

*Although it is not mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants, section 17, a priest is allowed to perform the wedding ceremony. It is important to understand that marriage is a sacrament and covenant with God, and the two being married should understand this principle before the actual marriage similar to how those desiring to be baptized should know the principles of the Church of Christ. (*A. King)

D&C 111:1 According to the custom of all civilized nations, marriage is regulated by laws and ceremonies: therefore we believe, that all marriages in this Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints should be solemnized in a public meeting, or feast, prepared for that purpose: and that the solemnization should be performed by a presiding high priest, high priest, bishop, elder, or priest, not even prohibiting those persons who are desirous to get married, of being married by other authority.

Lesson 2 Unit 3. The Priest Ministers: The Priest and the Ordinances / Duties of the Priest

The priest may perform the marriage sacrament

Legal Responsibilities

It is important to remember that this sacrament also follows the laws of the land insomuch that there are certain requirements for licensing and filing that must be done from state to state.

Note that the church requires adherence to the procedure prescribed in section 111.

D&C 111:2a Marriage should be celebrated with prayer and thanksgiving; and at the solemnization, the persons to be married, standing together, the man on the right, and the woman on the left, shall be addressed, by the person officiating, as he shall be directed by the Holy Spirit; and if there be no legal objections, he shall say, calling each by their names:

2b "You both mutually agree to be each other's companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others, during your lives?"

2c And when they have answered "Yes," he shall pronounce them "husband and wife" in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by virtue of the laws of the country and authority vested in him:

2d "May God add his blessings and keep you to fulfill your covenants from henceforth and for ever. Amen."



Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general
2. Specific needs for our day

II. The Priest and Family Duties

1. Temporal (financial), social, spiritual needs
2. Visit families (pray vocally and in secret...attend to all family duties)

III. Ministry to the Group

Attending to needs individually and collectively

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general

The Family and the Kingdom of Heaven

It will be helpful for the priest to take a look at some of the concepts that best find fruition in and through the family unit, as they are developed within the ministry of the Christ. Although it should go without saying, it was by design that Jesus was born of the flesh and performed his works here on earth. Foreordained by the Father, he was sent to redeem man from sin and death, and thereby to restore man to a harmonious relationship with God. He typified many of the Kingdom principles throughout his ministry in what are easily seen as family ministry and functions. Although his ministry was confined to a limited geographical area and to a relatively few people, his work was directed toward all mankind, for, as he said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general

When we study Jesus' attitude ... toward women,...what he thought about marriage,...his regard for children, ...his contacts with families during his earthly ministry...we should readily envision what our response to families should look like. From his example, we can find rich material for the guidance of the priest in his work with families.

In contrast to numerous accounts in the Old Testament, the New Testament infrequently refers to families. However, Jesus was emphatic in his acceptance, promotion, and blessing of the family relationship. To him, marriage, the foundation of the home, was sacred. He opposed divorce (while acknowledging the exception in the law). Parents bore a responsibility for the rearing of their children in Christian precepts and practice. Children were likewise taught to not only obey, but in time to care for their parents. Truly, the family unit had demanded an important place in the kingdom of heaven.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general

The purpose of family ministry is to help the family build a Zion home life, wherein an intelligent love of God and understanding of his purposes fill the home. It is designed to release the Spirit of Christ which is already resident in the family. Family ministry should seek to help each family member express the presence of Christ and to motivate each member to serve Him.

A Zion home is a Christ-centered home where Christian love is not only talked about but experienced. It is one in which the moment someone enters, he or she can sense, if discerning, the presence of the Master. The home should be so full of understanding and mutual love that the children, without hesitancy, “embrace the truth and look upward” for the eternal principles from which spring happiness, compassion, and eventually our Zion community.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general

To such an end is family ministry directed, whether it be publicly in the church or at the more personal level in the home. Family ministry involves both the perfecting of the saints as individuals and the strengthening as a unit of the family and the home, which is the cradle of character, the laboratory of life...a home and a neighborhood which prove to be the testing ground of godly, human relationships.

Undergirding any program for a branch is the divine purpose which centers in;

1. the winning of souls to Jesus Christ, and
2. the development of souls after his likeness.

This divine purpose is accomplished as priesthood authority is manifest through adequate programs of missionary and shepherding ministry associated with the ordinances of the church. The organizational structure of the priesthood provided in the Church of Jesus Christ is uniquely designed to provide this ministry.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general

The standing ministry in the church is given a broad responsibility for family life. This includes the material as well as the spiritual welfare of the family. Each phase of the total life of the family is important. A healthy spiritual life is primary, of course. This is a constructive force for good, a defense against evil. Therefore, ministry should lay the foundation for the life of the Spirit, and build up spiritual life in the family.

But to care for spiritual needs is only part of the story. Adequacy of housing, clothing, nutrition and other material needs is regarded as important, too. Recreation, education and other social needs also come into the picture. Families, both old and young, must be taught that they are stewards over earthly blessings.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general

The gospel of Jesus provides the foundation of all we should teach to our families and our children. Building upon the rock of the gospel, the priest, as a member of the standing ministry, is directed toward certain specific duties. Among them we find these pertaining to the family:

- He is to visit the house of each member.
- He is to exhort the family to pray vocally and in secret.
- He is to see that the parents of the family attended to all family duties.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general

Furthermore, parents should be trained in how to provide for their children within the gospel law. A few fields within this training include:

- They are to bring their children to the church to be blessed by the elders (D&C 17:19). Christ blessed children in his ministry in Judea (Matt 19:13-15) as well as in America as recorded in the Book of Mormon (3 Nephi 8).
- They are to teach their children religious precepts.(e.g. D&C 28:13; 68:4). No one is better fitted than the parents to do this.
- It is their responsibility to provide maintenance and inheritance for their children if possible, again intertwining the material needs of life with the spiritual (DC 58:11; 82:2).

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general

Family ministry should provide an understanding of the "celestial law" as the basis for the development of each individual of the family. This term is encountered in the instruction given the church at the camp near Fishing River, Missouri, in 1834. Specifically the thought expressed was that "Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom" (D&C 101:2).

Christ took pains in his earthly ministry to state fully the "celestial law." The fundamental expression of this law is in Matthew 5, 6 and 7. In the restoration of the gospel in 1830, the New Testament teachings of Christ are brought to the modern scene. As Christ incorporated in his teachings the permanent elements of the Mosaic Law, so also the Restoration incorporated them. He uniquely stressed man's stewardship under God. The Restoration made this quite prominent. There was no substitute for the teachings of the Master.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general

There are several scriptures which point to the significance of the principles of family ministry. Here are just a few to consider:

"Feed the flock of God which is among you taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock, " (1 Peter 5:2, 3)

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28)

..this is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."
(D&C 22:23)

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general
2. Specific needs for our day

Family ministry by the church is still needed...desperately needed. Although family ministry has always been necessary, today life is so much more complicated than it was in the years when the church was restored, or even a generation ago. The family faces so many influences, good and bad, affecting the trend and stability of the family, that family ministry is a "must." Family solidarity and progress in Christian sainthood, even family survival, depends upon it.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general
2. Specific needs for our day

The institution of the family continues to be the most vital factor in western civilization.

Kinship of the family naturally serves as the foundation of racial and national feeling. It is also the foundation of world brotherhood.

Because ethnic ties and national patriotism develop within the family, these ethnic groups must be seen as joined in harmony with God's kingdom, even as we see the necessary working relations within individual nations and within the world as a whole. Paul said "God that made the world and all things therein...hath made of one blood all nations of men... For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:24-28). World brotherhood in Christ is made possible by family ministry carried to its perfection through a church having a world-wide message.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general
2. Specific needs for our day

With the family comes responsibility for the children born into its circle. Many nations, in addition to custom and tradition, have enacted laws relating to parental responsibility for children born to them. Primitive societies, more or less effectively, attain the same end by custom and tradition alone. The nature of responsibility may vary widely, but the responsibility persists.

The moral obligation of parenthood also focuses responsibility upon the family. The father and mother bring the child into the world. It is their child. Theirs is the obligation to provide shelter, food, and other necessities of life.

Law and custom aside, the truest focus of responsibility arises from parental love. We often refer to this love as being instinctive. The priest and anyone who may visit within the family should be able to readily discern if this love within the family typifies the love of Jesus for each of his children. If not, counsel to that end must occur.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general
2. Specific needs for our day

The institution of family life in its day-by-day activities provides a means of social and democratic development.

Manners and customs are most easily learned in family life.

Parental authority and example are not only a guide and bulwark in the life of the child; they illustrate in human relationships the meaning and authority and example of our Heavenly Father and lead to obedience to him.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general
2. Specific needs for our day

The need for family ministry today is further shown in consideration of the problems encountered by the modern family. We may see ministerial opportunities when addressing many issues in the home:

Economic

Social

Moral

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general
2. Specific needs for our day

The need for family ministry today is further shown in consideration of the problems encountered by the modern family. We may see ministerial opportunities when addressing many issues in the home:

Economic

every family requires income
reasonable security is needed in the family
working conditions should be safe, healthy, and conducive to Christian living
budgeting within the scope of income and expenses

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general
2. Specific needs for our day

The need for family ministry today is further shown in consideration of the problems encountered by the modern family. We may see ministerial opportunities when addressing many issues in the home:

Social

sufficient clothing, sanitary and comfortable housing,
recreation and amusement are important to the family, not just kids
urban...may need more supervision with playgrounds, etc
rural...chance for children to experience isolation, no sharing recreation opportunities
addiction to social/technical devises (phones, computers, games, TV, music, etc)

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general
2. Specific needs for our day

The need for family ministry today is further shown in consideration of the problems encountered by the modern family. We may see ministerial opportunities when addressing many issues in the home:

Moral

Lying, cheating, indulgence, gossip
lack of respect for property
lack of honesty in workplace or school
declining standards of workmanship
fair dealing in trade

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general
2. Specific needs for our day

The need for family ministry today is further shown in consideration of the problems encountered by the modern family. We may see ministerial opportunities when addressing many issues in the home:

Moral

The moral decline in today's society hits us at every age level and in so many different places. We must be careful about what we and our children watch, hear, and are being taught. With the internet's fingertip access, our children are at danger like never before of coming across what they can easily see as acceptable and normal. It floods and destroys their minds. We must likewise monitor what our schools and related institutions are teaching them. Crime, drinking, smoking and vaping, lewdness and vulgarity are commonplace and when gone unchallenged, become the norm for adults and children alike.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general
2. Specific needs for our day

The need for family ministry today is further shown in consideration of the problems encountered by the modern family. We may see ministerial opportunities when addressing many issues in the home:

Moral

Our priesthood MUST remind families that there are certain things that society accepts and even encourages that the Father sees as abominations. The priest should understand the conditions affecting family life in order to prepare himself to minister intelligently to the families under his care.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general
2. Specific needs for our day

Family ministry is one of the greatest needs of our people today. Today, the family as a unit is being threatened on every front. Family ministry, then, is one of the most significant aspects of the purpose behind God calling men into His priesthood. It is the responsibility of all who have accepted this High and Holy calling.

"Go forth from house to house, teaching the people and I will go before you." (Matt 6:26) Thus spoke Jesus from the mountain top to his disciples and in so doing he inaugurated the family ministry of the church. This charge and responsibility has not been changed over the centuries.

Those who would be involved in effective family ministry must exhibit love toward God and all people. This love will motivate men to take time to "organize themselves" and prepare for the important responsibility of family ministry. This preparation will be a balance between personal study and active participation in "on the job training."

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

1. Family ministry in general
2. Specific needs for our day

For some families, the only ministry they may receive may be that which is taken into their homes by the priesthood. May it be enlivening, uplifting, helpful, and in the image of Christ, who we represent. May the life of every individual in the family be precious in your sight. May their salvation have an utmost importance in your ministry.

Offer books, tracts, online information, etc for those who may not be able to walk through the doors of the church. And always, offer yourself.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

The Message of Ministry in the Home

The message carried to the home may vary widely through a period of time, for family needs continually change as the family matures or social emphases shift. There are, however, three main fields from which the message is drawn. The priesthood visiting our homes should be familiar with each.

1. The gospel of the kingdom is the source material of all richness and permanent value in home ministry. The Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants are essential.
2. The specific message needed for a given occasion, arising from a knowledge of the needs of the family or some member of it. The Spirit or circumstance may dictate the direction of a visit...sick, bereaved, nonmember, possibly those who are indifferent or objectors.
3. The representation of the program of the church as a whole. You should know what programs and direction the branch or church at large are focused on. What goals, what study material, revelation and guidance? What financial needs does the church have and what programs of assistance are available?

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry:

I. The Family and the Restoration

The Message of Ministry in the Home

Summary:

The minister brings to the home the eternal truth of God in the gospel of the kingdom;

He acquaints the family with the institutions of the church and their goals and needs;

He familiarizes the family with the immediate goals of the church and enlists their help.

He brings a warming and convincing testimony of the divinity of Christ and paves the way for the comforting influence of the Holy Spirit in the maturing life of the family.

The minister to the home is a shepherd and a teacher, advisor and a friend.

He is the immediate representative of Christ to the family.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

II. The Priest and **Family Duties**

1. Temporal (material, social, spiritual needs)
2. Visit families (pray vocally and in secret...attend to **all family duties**)

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

II. The Priest and **Family Duties**

1. Temporal (material, social, spiritual needs)

Let us here focus upon family duties.

"The priest's duty is to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and administer the sacrament, and visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret, and **attend to all family duties.**"

Duty is defined as the "conduct due to parents and supervisors, as shown in obedience or submission; respect; reverence. It is further defined as "that which a person is bound by moral obligation to do; or not to do; that which one ought to do." These concepts of duty imply the relationship of children to parents, and the relationship and obligation of parents to children.

Here we suggest that the meaning of the term "family duties" may be understood clearly and realistically by studying the needs of the family. To supply those needs which minister to the well-being of the family, materially, socially, or religiously, it is the duty of parents to provide or seek to provide. The priest's friendly counsel and help concerning family duties may be of inestimable value at this point.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

II. The Priest and **Family Duties**

1. Temporal (material, social, spiritual needs)

A. Family duties arise from the material needs.

*This includes shelter.

The family needs a home, with neighborhood surroundings favoring as fully as possible the rearing of children and the promotion of family life. This may include awareness of physical surroundings (dangers, influences, etc), sufficient space for the number of persons in the family, comfortable furnishings, and so forth.

*This also includes consideration of clothing
(seasonal and climate appropriate)

*As well as food,
which provides a balanced diet,

*And also adequate income

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

II. The Priest and **Family Duties**

1. Temporal (material, social, spiritual needs)

B. Family duties arise from social needs.

Prominent among the social needs of the family is that of education, schooling, etc.

Social wellbeing may also entail providing for cultural and recreation associations and opportunities with neighbors and friends.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

II. The Priest and **Family Duties**

1. Temporal (material, social, spiritual needs)

C. Family duties arise from religious needs.

Parental responsibility for the religious training of children is emphatically stated in church discipline (D. & C. 68:4). This responsibility is placed where it should be, for no person or agency has the influence nor the opportunity to educate the children of the family to compare in effectiveness with that of the parents. Beginning with the blessing of the child, and with especial reference to the first eight years, some specific requirements are set forth.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

II. The Priest and **Family Duties**

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--The child should be taught about **repentance**, which is fundamentally related to the knowledge of what is right and wrong.

--The child should be taught to have **faith in Christ**, the son of the Living God.

--The child is to have an understanding concerning **baptism** and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the **laying on of hands**. **Among others, this rite is a firsthand illustration for teaching the authority of priesthood acting in the stead of Christ in the ordinances of the church. -

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

II. The Priest and Family Duties

1. Temporal (material, social, spiritual needs)
2. Visit families (pray vocally and in secret...attend to all family duties)

Along with these principles of the gospel of the kingdom, Section 68:4 associates several additional admonitions concerning conduct which the children are to learn. The admonitions cover additional family duties to be attended to.

The first is "they shall also **teach their children to pray.**" A child's prayer may be simple, but the habit of prayer is not simple.

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II. The Priest and Family Duties

1. Temporal (material, social, spiritual needs)
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A second admonition that they shall teach their children "to **walk uprightly before the Lord.**" Some examples of this include...

The Sabbath day is to be observed and kept holy.

The "inhabitants of Zion" are to be industrious and faithful in their work;

They are to seek "the riches of eternity

They are to study and understand and live the Word of Truth.

They are NOT to be idle, or greedy.

They should respect the rights and property of others;

They should be faithful in keeping promises; honest in relation with others

They should respect and practice virtue and personal righteousness.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

II. The Priest and Family Duties

1. Temporal (material, social, spiritual needs)
2. Visit families (pray vocally and in secret...attend to all family duties)

In these matters parents should teach their children to think and act for themselves in the light of the principles of life patiently put before them. Ultimately their own **agency** will be tested.

Parents often make decisions for growing children, but their effort should be directed always toward forming in the children the power of decision based upon the inner standards of righteousness. In this is safety and salvation for everyone.

In everything the parents must set the example,

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II. The Priest and Family Duties

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Additionally, attention should be given to the duties that children have regarding their parents. Not all family duties are placed on the part of the parents. The children also have their duties to discharge. One of the first of these is obedience to parents.

"Honor thy father and mother" is still a valid commandment, not to be overlooked among the family duties.

The next duty is often overlooked as children become adults. As parents age, it may be necessary to point out that a paramount duty of children is the care of their parents at this time.

The priest should guide family thinking toward this *duty* long before the duty becomes one that *needs* specific attention.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

II. The Priest and Family Duties

1. Temporal (material, social, spiritual needs)
2. Visit families (pray vocally and in secret...attend to all family duties)

The following are situations where special needs and visits may be required:

- The sick and afflicted
those suffering from illness, the effects of an accident, etc.
- The bereaved
food, friendly contact, economic need, guidance and direction to navigate funeral, etc.
- The poverty stricken
- The aged and shut-ins

- Those antagonistic towards the church

Whether real or fancied, these attitudes exist. These problems should be taken seriously, and a careful and prayerful attempt be made to reach the person to try to determine the cause of the disaffection. There may be times, however, when it is necessary to move past the cause, and proceed with efforts to win the person involved back to fellowship.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

II. The Priest and Family Duties

1. Temporal (material, social, spiritual needs)
2. Visit families (pray vocally and in secret...attend to all family duties)

In attempting to offer family ministry, the priest will frequently encounter the indifferent, those objecting to being visited, the disaffected, the faultfinders, the "miffed" ones, and the unconverted church member.

Before these people can be helped their negative and even hostile attitudes must be overcome. This calls first of all for the establishment of friendly relations with the person involved, whereby confidence is felt in the priest.

The indifferent one may have begun his church life well and then waxed cold because of a lack of understanding of church objectives. Bad habits may have overtaken him, or he may not have been challenged with enough to do for the church.

Where a person objects to being visited, one cannot force association upon him. Here the search for a common ground may be a slow and tedious process. Friendly relations and visits may be essential as a start.

The person may have become disaffected due to disagreements or quarrels with fellow members, church officers, or others; or opposition to church policies and procedures or doctrines. Remember, sometimes the "branch" may have been the one in the wrong.

The faultfinders and "miffed ones" The priest in his contact should constantly maintain a charitable outlook toward others, an attitude on his part which may do more than words can. Healing may come out of this confidence of friendship.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

II. The Priest and Family Duties

1. Temporal (material, social, spiritual needs)
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The unconverted church member presents a very serious problem, but here, as in other situations, the remedy begins in the establishment of friendships with him by the priest. From that point, all opportunities possible to lead to a better understanding of the principles of the kingdom must be used.

Bring an interesting article to their attention, or a church book, depending upon the background of interest or experience of the person, or their age. In addition to these, and possibly right at hand, are invitations to hear sermons in local congregations or on-line, or attend missionary series of sermons or lectures.

Again, it is a matter of keeping up the contacts, and not giving up until the end in sight is reached.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

II. The Priest and Family Duties

1. Temporal (material, social, spiritual needs)
2. Visit families (pray vocally and in secret...attend to all family duties)

To eliminate many of these antagonistic attitudes, it will be well to keep these thoughts in mind:

1. Develop friendship as a means of gaining the person's confidence.
2. As friendship unfolds, watch for clues to the cause of the attitude.
3. Carefully, tactfully, patiently, for as long a time as may be necessary, use available means to clear up the attitude and bring the person into happy church association.
4. Pray constantly for the leading of the Holy Spirit in this work affecting a human soul.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

II. The Priest and Family Duties

1. Temporal (material, social, spiritual needs)
2. Visit families (pray vocally and in secret...attend to all family duties)

Family Needs Calling for a Constructive Ministry

Many needs grow out of the day-by-day life of the family. A brief survey of these needs are listed for discussion. What are some suggestions as to satisfying these needs?

- Children of the family at various age levels need specific ministry.
- Faithful members of the church need ministry.
- The family with a newborn offers opportunity for ministry.
- New arrivals in the neighborhood, community, area require and appreciate a welcoming ministry.
- Newly baptized members need to feel they are a vital part of the church.
- The priest's (priesthood's) own family should not be neglected.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

II. The Priest and Family Duties

1. Temporal (material, social, spiritual needs)
2. Visit families (pray vocally and in secret...attend to all family duties)

A **brief summary** of this section may be useful at this point.

- The meaning of "family duties" is found in a study of family needs. Wherever a need exists, economically, socially, or spiritually, there is a duty to perform.
- The priest is to encourage the family to supply material and social needs. If there are lacks, he will turn to suitable persons or sources to find a remedy.
- The priest is to guide and assist families in their religious development including the parental training of children looking toward baptism and development of righteous living.
- The priest seeks to guide the development of children looking toward having a proper respect for and obedience to parents.
- The priest encourages the families in his charge to be neighborly, thoughtful of and helpful to those with problems requiring fellowship.
- The priest endeavors to allay and reconcile antagonistic attitudes toward his ministry, or to others.
- The priest carries on a constructive ministry to all in his charge, endeavoring to meet the special need of each family and incorporate their lives with the church.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

II. The Priest and Family Duties

1. Temporal (material, social, spiritual needs)
2. Visit families (pray vocally and in secret...attend to all family duties)

In all these matters the priest is a friend of the family, whose love is not diminished by rebuffs or discouragements; whose patience is endless; whose resourcefulness is inexhaustible; whose humility seeks always the preferment of his brethren; whose faith constantly seeks light and guidance from the "throne of grace" for those over whom he is the shepherd.

Truly, the work of the priest in helping the family and the individual members of the family to "attend to all family duties" is of supreme importance in building and extending the kingdom of God.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

III. Ministry to the Group

Attending to needs individually and collectively

The Scriptures make it clear that the priest is eligible to act as presiding officer, to administer certain of the ordinances, to preach, and to preside over all the spiritual affairs of the branch, the one limitation being in the area of the laying on of hands. The priest may ordain other Aaronic priesthood, but he cannot confirm new members, or bless children, or administer to the sick. The authority given to the priest is sufficient so that he can gather a group of people together, teach them the gospel, and administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to members. Thus the priest is largely free to proceed to promote the extension of the church in his own locality.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

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Only when the time comes for new converts to be confirmed is it essential for the elder to be present; although, of course, it is intended to have the Melchisedec priesthood available from the beginning, where it is possible. The plan of the church provides that the priest shall be actively engaged in winning new members, baptizing them, and nurturing them until such time as an elder can be obtained with the necessary authority to confirm them members of the church. After they thus become members he continues to visit them with a view to teaching and leading them in Zion's ways of life.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

III. Ministry to the Group

Attending to needs individually and collectively

In most branches the priest's chief function is to assist in watching over the members of the church and encouraging them to attend to all family duties. This function rests on all Aaronic priesthood. In cases, however, where no elders are present the priest serves in the place of the elder in caring for matters which concern the entire flock. Under ordinary circumstances, matters concerning the entire flock are left primarily with the elders. The Lord frees the priest to extend the work of the church according to his ability. Some priests are particularly bent toward visiting in the homes of friends of the church. Other priests invest most of their ministry visiting and caring for the members of the church.

Lesson 3 Unit 1. The Priest and Home Ministry

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Since the possibility exists that you may be placed in charge of a group of people in the absence of an elder, you should begin now to observe the various services of the church with a view to seeing how it is done. We often see church services through the eyes of the worshipper. Now you must see these services through the eyes of the one in charge, becoming aware of the function of each man in the service. What does each do? When and how is the best way for it to be done? For what emergency should you be prepared? All such questions will become of interest to you as you see that you might one day be assisting or acting as a presiding elder.

Lesson 3 Unit 2. The Priest and other ministries

I. Priest works with other standing ministers

- 1.The spirit of unity
- 2.The priest under the direction of the elder or presiding officer

II. Priest develops and applies his talents

- 1.Talent inventory / awareness of responsibilities
- 2.Preparation,
- 3.Necessary improvement

Lesson 3 Unit 2. The Priest and other ministries

I. Priest works with other standing ministers

1. The spirit of unity

Unity within the church must extend from member to priesthood and vice versa in all facets of the work. From an officer and the priesthood's standpoint, the official work of any branch requires direction in order to harmonize the work of each official with the other officers and the branch program as a whole.

In the organization of the work of the church, a very important function is delegated to the pastor of local branches or congregation. This is to coordinate or unite in purpose, goals, and methods the work of the priesthood in his charge. The priest falls under this direction.

The beginning of such coordination lies in the spirit of unity in which men work together in the church. This unity is stressed in the New Testament and the Doctrine and Covenants both. Much Latter Day revelation instructs us in the need for such harmony in our ministry.

Lesson 3 Unit 2. The Priest and other ministries

I. Priest works with other standing ministers

1. The spirit of unity

The unity of the church was emphasized in a revelation given in Doctrine and Covenants 122:17; "Continue in steadfastness and faith. Let nothing separate you from each other and the work whereunto you have been called; and I will be with you by my Spirit and presence of power unto the end."

This promise applies to every officer of the church who, cooperating with his brethren, single-mindedly does the will of God.

Turning from the statement of theory under which the church is organized, and by which in all ages it should operate, we may well consider the steps by which coordination of the work of the branch or congregation is brought about. There are four principal steps which if carefully followed, will affect harmony in the official work of the branch and be of especial importance in ministry to the family in the home. These are;

- A. Pastoral supervision of all priesthood work in the branch
- B. Exercise of trained initiative by the priest
- C. The priest's report to the pastor of work done
- D. A follow-up of the priest's unfinished work and continuation of ministry to each family.

Lesson 3 Unit 2. The Priest and other ministries

I. Priest works with other standing ministers

- 1.The spirit of unity
- 2.The priest under the direction of the elder or presiding officer

A. Pastoral supervision of all priesthood work in the branch

Broadly viewed, the work of the standing ministry with the families of the branch or congregation should be carefully planned by the pastor with the following ends in view:

- 1.To minister to every family
- 2.To back up each other's efforts
- 3.To avoid duplication of effort
- 4.To prevent conflicting visits where one officer calls without another officer's knowledge

These points are obvious but often disregarded or overlooked. Where uncoordinated work occurs in a branch, confusion follows. Visiting the house of each member becomes a reality when systematic plans to that end are carefully developed and carried out. (Remember that part of planning for visiting the house of each member should involve friendship-building contacts.)

As part of any good visiting plane, the priest should unvaryingly bring to the attention of the pastor, specific family or individual problems and successes. We will discuss this further in the reporting portion of the class.

Lesson 3 Unit 2. The Priest and other ministries

I. Priest works with other standing ministers

1. The spirit of unity
2. The priest under the direction of the elder or presiding officer

B. Exercise of trained initiative by the priest

Although the coordination of ministry and specifically visiting duties falls under the purview of pastor, the priest, of necessity, is required by the work of his office to exercise certain personal initiative in the performance of his work.

Personal initiative is presupposed in the quotation from Doctrine and Covenants 119:8, which states that "All are called according to the gifts of God unto them..."

Another urge toward the exercise of initiative is found in the instruction of Doctrine and Covenants 58:6 that "men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will. But he that doeth not anything until he is commanded, and receiveth a commandment with a doubtful heart, and keepeth it with slothfulness, the same is damned."

The exercising of talents will be discussed in an upcoming section.

Lesson 3 Unit 2. The Priest and other ministries

I. Priest works with other standing ministers

- 1.The spirit of unity
- 2.The priest under the direction of the elder or presiding officer

C. The priest's report to the pastor of work done

The pastor (presiding elder) is entitled to a report of priesthood work. In fact, he must have this report if he is himself to labor efficiently as the pastor of the flock. Some of the reasons why include:

1. He needs to know the progress made by you as priest in your assigned task.
2. He needs to know the condition of the family to which you as priest are ministering.
3. He needs this report so as to know how to advise you when need for counsel arises, how to correlate your work with others, and provide for additional ministry to the family which may lie beyond the exercise of the office of priest.
4. Finally, this report should be made because the priest, as pointed out above, does not labor alone. He is one of a team. And as others beside himself call upon the family and minister unto them in the course of their priestly work, the reports of each give the total picture needed by the pastor concerning the particular family.

Lesson 3 Unit 2. The Priest and other ministries

I. Priest works with other standing ministers

1. The spirit of unity
2. The priest under the direction of the elder or presiding officer

C. The priest's report to the pastor of work done

In reporting the ministry performed, there usually is no need to make a cumbersome report. A brief summary something like the following should be sufficient, and where personal conference is possible between pastor and priest will serve as a permanent record of what has been done.

1. When was the visit made?
2. Who was visited--that is, the name of the family and address?
3. Who were the visitors--that is, the priest and anyone who accompanied him?
4. What was the purpose of the visit?
5. What was done in the course of the visit?
6. What were the apparent results?
7. What should be done next?

Brief answers to each of the foregoing questions should cover the essential aspects of the visit and fill the needs of a present report and future reference.

Lesson 3 Unit 2. The Priest and other ministries

I. Priest works with other standing ministers

- 1.The spirit of unity
- 2.The priest under the direction of the elder or presiding officer

C. The priest's report to the pastor of work done

There are some things to avoid in reporting which constantly should be kept in mind as the report is written. In fact, these are things to avoid almost anywhere. They are as follows:

1. Write no disparaging remarks about the family or its members.
2. Indulge in no conjectures as to family or individual motives.
3. Do not report as "facts" that which you do not positively know to be facts.
4. Do not talk or write about the visit to anyone other than the officer who accompanied you or your branch president. There are few exceptions to this rule.

Lesson 3 Unit 2. The Priest and other ministries

I. Priest works with other standing ministers

1. The spirit of unity
2. The priest under the direction of the elder or presiding officer

D. A follow-up of the priest's unfinished work and continuation of ministry to each family.

The following suggests the nature of the follow-up of his work:

His follow-up will be a rather continuous ministry. Sometimes this ministry occurs at the church or in passing as well as at the home. This continuous ministry is therefore both incidental as well as prearranged.

The nature of a specific follow-up becomes obvious as a given visit or contact is made. Usually, it is seen in the course of the visit or contact. Appointments with the family should be at their convenience at all times, and the wishes of the family in this respect must be deferred to.

Family ministry is a lifetime process. Till everyone reaches perfection, there is need for ministry on a practical, intelligent and spiritual basis. Persistent and enthusiastic teaching of the things of the kingdom is always needed in the lives of members and families.

Lesson 3 Unit 2. The Priest and other ministries

II. The priest develops and applies his talents

1. Talent inventory / awareness of responsibility

A priest has a big responsibility placed upon his shoulders once ordained. Although talents are constantly being honed and developed, he should come to the office with an inventory of skills already in place. It is useful to understand what those talents may be in order to be the most effective minister possible. What are your most useful skills and how can improvement be made based on that foundation.

An ordained minister should immediately strive for a quality of life, a proficiency of ministry, and a sustained effort of high intelligence commensurate with the purposes of the Restoration movement. Without much delay, an ordained priest should be capable of full contribution to the life of the people, able administration of the affairs of the kingdom, and an aggressive leadership in evangelistic endeavor adequate to the needs of the age.

To be effectual as a minister one must be a good man. In the Christian ministry there is no substitute for righteousness. The effectual minister is right at heart, therefore, right in thought and in deed, a potent force for good among his people

He must be sincere. He must have strong convictions regarding the majesty of God, his purpose in human existence, about man's worth and potential, about the church's role, about the Restoration Movement as the means of drawing heaven and earth together in covenant bonds.

Lesson 3 Unit 2. The Priest and other ministries

II. The priest develops and applies his talents

1. Talent inventory / awareness of responsibility

To be an effectual minister one must be susceptible to the Christian emotions; he is the kind of man who instinctively hates sin for what it is and for what it does to his people. He instinctively loves righteousness for what it is and for what it does for his people.

To be an effectual minister one must be master of himself. He is the kind of man who has himself under control.

Lesson 3 Unit 2. The Priest and other ministries

II. The priest develops and applies his talents

2. Preparation

Preparation begins with authority to minister. There must be a call of God and the **conviction in the minister himself** that the call is divine.

The ordained minister becomes capable to serve in the purposes of their calling only by study, prayer, and in actual service in the work of the office to which they have been ordained.

This calling may in various ways and at various times require a knowledge of

- languages, of peoples, of customs, of laws and of historical background, of diplomacy, and of international practices and world politics;
- and on the home front a knowledge of economics, of sociology, of business, of industry, of commerce, and of the professions;
- and a specific knowledge of the people with whom leadership is to work in the church, and whom they are to stimulate to their part in learning, in living, in loving, and in serving as stewards in all these fields.

For only so may Zion be achieved, and her purposes executed in all the earth.

Lesson 3 Unit 2. The Priest and other ministries

II. The priest develops and applies his talents

3. Necessary Improvement

For men already ordained there are helps in the form of local classes, priesthood meetings, institutes, reunions, clinics, and conferences, etc.

For one not yet ordained there may be pre-ordination classes. Unordained men, too, may have access to conferences and other meetings provided for the priesthood.

For any man, the matter of his widening his range of learning as a background, and his specific learning for working in the particular field may prompt further study. This may even include classes in the local college or university.

Not every person is equally equipped to stand as a minister from day one. This raises the matter of agreeableness of personality, of personal appearance, of appropriateness of dress for whatever occasion, of the smoothness of one's approach or of his execution.

So very much depends upon the impression one is to make, on the respect his people may have for him as a person; on the confidence they have in him as to reliability of information; and on his ability to present himself. He must, therefore, build himself into a man at once acceptable and agreeable and proficient as to powers of expression, as well as to content of word and of ministry. Understand that this is a process and pretended character and knowledge do as much to harm as they do to help.

Lesson 3 Unit 2. The Priest and other ministries

II. The priest develops and applies his talents

3. Necessary Improvement

An example of what is meant here is had in latter day instruction to the ministry of the church who are counseled that "they shall lay aside lightness of speech and lightness of manner when standing to declare the word, and shall study to approve their ministrations to the people by candor in speech and courtesy in demeanor, that as ministers of the gospel they may win souls unto Christ." (D&C 119:2b)

Then there is the particular problem of how one is to say what he has to say, as to words, pronunciation, construction, voice, emphasis and as to impressiveness. One's earnestness may carry him a long way. It cannot, however, compensate for repelling ways, or for one's killing of the King's English; Grammar, therefore, and rhetoric, public speech, poise, personal appearance, and adaptability may be among the things in which one needs to qualify or improve.

Lesson 3 Unit 3 Summary

The Aaronic Priesthood is designed to coordinate with the Melchisedec Priesthood and can be seen to mirror the purposes of the higher priesthood in a temporal way. Note the following comparison by Brother LFP Curry:

THE PRIEST

"Pastor to families"

"As the presiding Elder is to the congregation so is the Priest to the Family."

The Priest is called:

- To visit the home of each member.
- To exhort them to pray vocally and in secret.
- To exhort them to attend to all family duties.
- To teach the principles of the gospel.
- To lift up his voice by the Holy Spirit.

THE TEACHER

"Patriarch to the Branch"

"As the Priest is to the family, so is the Teacher to the individual. "

The Teacher is called:

- To watch over the church always.
- To be with and strengthen the members.
- To see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other,
- To see that there is neither lying, back-biting nor evil-speaking.
- To see that the church meet together often.
- To see that all the members do their duty.
- To invite all to come to Christ

THE DEACON

"Pastor of Temporalities"

"As the bishop is to the church, so is the Deacon to the members."

The Deacon is called:

- To watch over the church.
- To minister to the needy, the widow and the fatherless.
- To counsel in temporal affairs.
- To establish faith in God in the hearts of people, beginning with a faith in temporal law and power.

Lesson 3 Unit 3 Summary

The Aaronic Priest overview class along with the class on The Teacher and The Deacon should be taken in conjunction with other available courses including:

- The nature of priesthood
- Keys to the Ministering of Angels
- Visiting in the home
- Worship and public speaking
- The sacraments of the Church

The Conference of Restoration Elders also supports ministries that help with family finance and stewardship. You should be familiar with the Freedom Stewardship Ministries program of the CRE as well as your local oblation and tithing programs.

D&C 104:10 The power and authority of the lesser, or Aaronic, priesthood is to hold the keys of the ministering of angels and to administer in outward ordinances-the letter of the gospel-the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, agreeably to the covenants and commandments.

May His Spirit guide and bless you in this ministry and through all your lives. In Jesus' name. Amen

