

Preparing for General Conference

Hearing the Savior's Words through General Conference

Prepare to study by listening to a hymn or song and saying a prayer. Create a note for this lesson in your seminary notebook. As you study, write any questions you have and look for answers.

Intentionally preparing for and participating in general conference enables us to receive personal revelation. The messages of inspiration and guidance given in general conference come from the Lord through His chosen leaders. This lesson can help you prepare to hear personal messages from the Savior in general conference.

Study the Doctrine

Read the [statement from the talk "The Blessings of General Conference,"](#) from Elder Paul V. Johnson of the Seventy.

My mother loved general conference. She always tuned in the radio and TV and turned the volume loud enough that it was difficult to find a place in the house where conference couldn't be heard. She wanted her children to listen to the talks and would ask us from time to time what we remembered. Once in a while I went outside with one of my brothers to play ball during a Saturday conference session. We would take a radio with us because we knew our mother might quiz us later. We would play ball and occasionally take a break to listen carefully so we could report to Mom. I doubt my mother was fooled when we both happened to remember the same thing from an entire session.

That is no way to listen to conference. I have since repented. I have grown to love general conference, I'm sure partly because of my mother's love for the words of the living prophets. I remember listening to the sessions of a particular conference all alone in an apartment while I was in college. The Holy Ghost witnessed to my soul that Harold B. Lee, the President of the Church at that time, was truly a prophet of God. This happened before I went into the mission field, and I was excited to testify of a living prophet because I had come to know for myself. I have had that same witness about each of the prophets since that time.

Understanding the blessings of general conference can motivate us to prepare for and fully participate in conference. In February 1831, the Lord gave a revelation to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon instructing them to gather the elders together for a conference, which was held in June of that year.

Read [Doctrine and Covenants 44:2](#) and the following statement from President Russell M. Nelson, looking for some of the blessings of general conference.

The purpose of this and every general conference is to help us to hear Him. (Russell M. Nelson, "Opening Message," Ensign or Liahona, May 2020, 7)

Ponder and write your responses to the following questions:

- How well do you prepare to hear the Savior speak to you through the messages in general conference?

- How could improving your ability to hear the voice of Jesus Christ through general conference bless your life right now?

Complete both of the following activities to learn and practice different ways you can prepare for general conference.

Pondering questions you need to have answered

Skill

When Jesus Christ visited the Nephites, He invited them to prepare their minds to hear and understand His message (see 3 Nephi 17:3). One of the best ways you can prepare your mind to hear the words of Jesus Christ in general conference is to ponder questions you need to have answered (see Doctrine and Covenants 88:63– 64).

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, then of the First Presidency, explained what can happen as we listen for answers to our questions during general conference.

As you prepare for general conference, I invite you to ponder questions you need to have answered. For example, you might yearn for direction and guidance by the Lord regarding challenges you are facing.

Answers to your specific prayers may come directly from a particular talk or from a specific phrase. At other times answers may come in a seemingly unrelated word, phrase, or song. A heart filled with gratitude for the blessings of life and an earnest desire to hear and follow the words of counsel will prepare the way for personal revelation. (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “[General Conference—No Ordinary Blessing](#),” Ensign, Sep. 2011, 4)

Practice

Practice the counsel from President Uchtdorf by responding to the following questions:

- What questions do I have? What guidance or direction do I need for the challenges I face?

- What is something specific I will do to prepare my mind and heart to hear the Lord’s direction for me in general conference? (see [Mosiah 2:9](#)).

Taking notes

Skill

President Russell M. Nelson counseled us about how to get the most out of general conference:

From this pulpit today and tomorrow, you will continue to hear truth. Please make notes of thoughts that catch your attention and those that come into your mind and stay in your heart. Prayerfully ask the Lord to confirm that what you have heard is true. (Russell M. Nelson, “What Is True?,” Liahona, Nov. 2022, 30)

Examples

Example 1

Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

When I take notes at conference, I do not always write down exactly what the speaker is saying; I note the personalized direction the Spirit is giving me.

What is said is not as important as what we hear and what we feel. (Robert D. Hales, “General Conference: Strengthening Faith and Testimony,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2013, 6)

Example 2

Read the [statement from the talk “To Acquire Spiritual Guidance.”](#) by Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Now I share an experience that taught me a way to gain spiritual guidance. One Sunday I attended the priesthood meeting of a Spanish branch in Mexico City. I vividly recall how a humble Mexican priesthood leader struggled to communicate the truths of the gospel in his lesson material. I noted the intense desire he had to share those principles he strongly valued with his quorum members. He recognized that they were of great worth to the brethren present. In his manner there was an evidence of a pure love of the Savior and love of those he taught.

His sincerity, purity of intent, and love permitted a spiritual strength to envelop the room. I was deeply touched. Then I began to receive personal impressions as an extension of the principles taught by that humble instructor. They were personal and related to my assignments in the area. They came in answer to my prolonged, prayerful efforts to learn.

As each impression came, I carefully wrote it down. In the process, I was given precious truths that I greatly needed in order to be a more effective servant of the Lord. The details of the communication are sacred and, like a patriarchal blessing, were for my individual benefit. I was given specific directions, instructions, and conditioned promises that have beneficially altered the course of my life.

Subsequently, I visited the Sunday School class in our ward, where a very well-educated teacher presented his lesson. That experience was in striking contrast to the one enjoyed in the priesthood meeting. It seemed to me that the instructor had purposely chosen obscure references and unusual examples to illustrate the principles of the lesson. I had the distinct impression that this instructor was using the teaching opportunity to impress the class with his vast store of knowledge. At any rate, he certainly did not seem as intent on communicating principles as had the humble priesthood leader.

In that environment, strong impressions began to flow to me again. I wrote them down. The message included specific counsel on how to become more effective as an instrument in the hands of the Lord. I received such an outpouring of impressions that were so personal that I felt it was not appropriate to record them in the midst of a Sunday School class. I sought a more private location, where I continued to write the feelings that flooded into my mind and heart as faithfully as possible. After each powerful impression was recorded, I pondered the feelings I had received to determine if I had accurately expressed them in writing. As a result, I made a few minor changes to what had been written. Then I studied their meaning and application in my own life.

Subsequently I prayed, reviewing with the Lord what I thought I had been taught by the Spirit. When a feeling of peace came, I thanked Him for the guidance given. I was then impressed to ask, “Is there yet more to be given?” I received further impressions, and the process of writing down the impressions, pondering, and praying for confirmation was repeated. Again I was prompted to ask, “Is there more I should know?” And there was. When that last, most sacred experience was concluded, I had received some of the most precious, specific, personal direction one could hope to obtain in this life. Had I not responded to the first impressions and recorded them, I would not have received the last, most precious guidance.

What I have described is not an isolated experience. It embodies several true principles regarding communication from the Lord to His children here on earth. I believe that you can leave the most precious, personal direction of the Spirit unheard because you do not respond to, record, and apply the first promptings that come to you.

