

# Grandparenting and the Eternal Family Pattern

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*“There is more of a connection than many realize between the order and purpose of the universe and the order and harmony which exists in a happy and good family.”*

—President Spencer W. Kimball<sup>1</sup>

We are the happy parents of seven children and have earned the titles of grandparent or great-grandparent to nearly a hundred offspring. Our constant supplication is that our progeny will exert their faith, prove wise and true Saints, and, by their persistent endeavors, enjoy the full spectrum of the gospel. We have gratefully witnessed many tiny infants arriving and maturing to adulthood, choosing to live stalwartly righteous, gospel-wise, and faith-filled lives. We feel so blessed by each of our family members who valiantly hold to the rod (see 1 Nephi 8:24) and stay grounded in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Their righteous lives have heaped innumerable blessings upon them and their families and have enhanced and amplified our own eternal parental and wedded partnership. We feel no different than did the New Testament Apostle John when he conveyed his heartfelt charity toward the righteous of his day, expressing that he had “no greater joy than to hear that [his] children [or grandchildren or great-grandchildren] walk in truth” (3 John 1:4).

As grandparents, we would be wise to take heed of some scriptural instruction on how to conduct ourselves. Paul counsels: “That the aged men be . . . temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged



woman likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness . . . that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands. . . . Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. . . . In all things shewing a pattern of good works” (Titus 2:2–7).

Grandparents anywhere can have a positive, even pivotal, influence in the lives of their grandchildren. When grandparents have adaptation, creativity, and outstretched arms full of love, many a grandchild will bask in the affection that is endearingly unique to grandparents.

### **A Pattern in All Things**

We were teachers in a Gospel Doctrine class when the Lord’s pointed declaration came to our attention: “I will give unto you *a pattern in all things*, that ye may not be deceived” (D&C 52:14; emphasis added). As our lesson at that time centered around the influence of family on individuals, we turned to Brigham Young’s statement about a family pattern: “What is the basic pattern for a family? The pattern includes mother, father, sister, brother [and, of course, grandparents]. The human family, organized by our Heavenly Father, replicates the *premortal* family pattern.”<sup>2</sup> If we follow the Lord’s divinely designed family pattern, we are more likely to enjoy peace and harmony in our homes.

President Young already knew all this, but the Prophet Joseph must have felt some urgency about it because after his death he came to President Brigham Young and instructed him to “tell the people to keep the spirit of the Lord; and if they will, they will find themselves just as they were organized by our Father in Heaven before they came into the world. Our Father in Heaven organized the human family, but they are all disorganized and in great confusion.”<sup>3</sup> As we read the rest of the Lord’s statement about a pattern in all things, we learn that He is providing us with divine patterns so “that ye may not be deceived; for Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations” (D&C 52:14). That is why the Prophet Joseph was so adamant: Satan was breaking up the pattern in families.

If the people in the early 1800s had disorganized and confused families, it makes families of this century seem all the more confused. We are grateful that we know the Lord’s pattern for families because we were able to govern our own family accordingly, drawing upon the Spirit for direction.

### **Families in the Scriptures**

The scriptures offer examples of good families who taught their children the gospel despite facing significant trials. Four families come readily to mind:

- Adam and Eve and their children—the first mortal family unit patterned after the premortal family structure.
- Noah, his wife, and their sons and wives—those eight (see 1 Peter 3:20) were not just the only family; they were the only people left on earth (see Genesis 7:23).
- Abraham and Sarah, whose expanding family will be, and could already likely be, as “the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore” (Genesis 22:17).
- Lehi, Sariah, their four sons, Zoram, and Ishmael and his household—as Lehi and Ishmael’s children married, that family pattern continued as their families increased with the ongoing generations.

We, as grandparents, have given serious thought to Nephi’s statement regarding likening all scriptures to ourselves (see 1 Nephi 19:23). It struck us that one way for us to do this was to record our own family history, just as the four families listed above did.

When we first presented the concept of recording our family his-

tory, not everyone in the family took us seriously. Once they realized we were in earnest, however, it became a project for the entire family. Every family member was asked to write a personal history for the book. Parents wrote the histories of the smaller children and infants. Some family members really enjoyed writing up their life stories; others found it more difficult. With a great deal of persuasion, however, sometimes even because we wrote their histories for them, we finally had a history for every family member.

*Living in These Last Days*, as it was titled, is now fifty leather-bound books. It was an enormous undertaking, but because we worked on it as one extended family unit, it served as one of those projects that further united us as a family.

### **A Pattern of Recorded Lineages in the Scriptures**

As we were teaching about the lineages of Old Testament families, we became aware of the importance of recording genealogical information for future generations. The Bible and the Book of Mormon record the lineages of families sometimes clear back to Adam.

In our day, we search back in time to connect with our lineage. If we could go back far enough, we would link up with a generation in the Old Testament that would eventually take us back to Adam. That generations were continually updated in the Old Testament is indicative of the importance the Lord places on our lineage.

We can return to our previous examples of the family patterns to illustrate that they all had generation after generation follow them. The bottom line is that lineage, family history, genealogy—call them what you will—are essential in the Lord's plan of eternal families because those connecting links are, in essence, the ties that bind.

### **Our Lineage: A Family Temple Project**

In the late 1970s, President Spencer W. Kimball asked the Church members to complete four-generation family group sheets. We already had five generations finished, though we were not certain the information was listed at the Church Family History Library. So we brought in a disk and a few weeks later received notice that the disk had been listed. That meant the cards were ready and we could now do the ordinance work. What a surprise and delight when we picked up the cards: fourteen hundred of our ancestors needed temple ordinance work done for them!

We enlisted our brothers and sisters and all of our offspring over

twelve years of age to help us tackle the project. We initiated the project at a family Christmas gathering, setting a goal to complete the work for all fourteen hundred names. It took the entire following year to finish all the work for those ancestors, but when it was done, everyone was overjoyed. The whole experience brought the family closer together and strengthened the love we felt for one another as well as for our ancestors.

On Christmas Eve, our families traditionally have several of the younger children simulate the manger scene. We have continued that for the little children, but for everyone twelve years and older, our special tradition at Christmastime is to go to the temple and do ordinance work. The hallowed season commemorating the birth of Christ, whose perfect life is so full of promise for all mankind, is a perfect time to go to the temple as a family. There we have the ability to act as proxies, allowing our ancestors and others deceased to partake of the promises to the righteous in the plan of salvation.



### Patterns of Effective Communication in the Scriptures

Another pattern in the scriptures is a pattern of communication. Some ways to communicate are more effective than others, and certain methods are chosen depending on the circumstances. The following examples illustrate some of those ways:

- The Lord conversing with Adam and Eve and the prophets.
- The brother of Jared talking to the Lord face to face.
- King Benjamin preaching and having his words written and distributed to the people.
- Captain Moroni and Ammoron writing epistles to each other.

- The Lord giving Moses the Ten Commandments engraved on two stone tablets.
- Fathers giving verbal and written counsel and blessings to their sons.

Although not all of these illustrations are explicitly family-oriented, they show the importance of this pattern of communication.

### **Patterns of Effective Communication in the Family**

Maintaining effective communication is central to maintaining family unity and righteousness. Staying close as a family needs more than the casual contact of living in a home together. Staying united with family members requires conscious, regular efforts to interact and converse with one another.

Creative communication can abound within the family. We keep our family communication lines open by often doing things with our immediate and extended family. Some of the projects or traditions we will describe here began with our seven offspring, but most originated with grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Therefore, we originated or participated in most of these enterprises as grandparents or great-grandparents. The best result of all our projects was that they kept the family intact, in touch, and closely bonded. Even as we come close to having one hundred relatives in our immediate family, we are still close-knit. Many of the following activities will help other families to build unity and love.

*Family home evening.* When our children were growing up, Church leaders did not stress family home evening as much as they do now, but we already knew the important pattern of family home evening because we had learned it from our parents. Our family home evenings were held on Monday nights and through the years proved to be an enjoyable and binding time together. They consisted of prayer, music, a lesson, a fun activity, and refreshments.

In later years, President Kimball emphasized the results that would come from holding regular family home evenings. We were able to see the substance of his promise in our adult children as they lived their lives in righteousness. He promised that “as you faithfully plan and hold quality family home evenings, you will gain strength to withstand the temptations of the world and will receive many blessings which will help qualify you to enjoy your families through eternity in the Celestial Kingdom.”<sup>4</sup>

As we continue to see the program’s positive influence upon our

descendants, we feel so blessed that family home evening has always had a place in our family.

*Holiday traditions.* Holidays are always great opportunities for family communication. Christmastime for the Smith family always carries excitement and expectancy in the air and of course the Nativity with the little ones in costumes. One year, as the children were getting older, we had a major production of the Christmas story, complete with costumes and props and a cardboard donkey. That event was memorable.

*Christmas cards.* For nearly three decades, we have sent Christmas cards that not only bear testimony of Christ but also represent our growing children in some fashion. Each year we design our own cards. One year the cards had pictures of our newest babies. Another year our grown children's homes were the design. Because so many in the family had served or were serving missions, one year we had the cards depict all the places they had been. It was amazing to discover that they had served on every continent except Antarctica. And that is because there is no missionary program there!

*Family conference.* If there really is a pattern in all things, the Church certainly has a grasp on the conference pattern: ward conferences, stake conferences, regional conferences, general conferences, and many more. Borrowing this pattern, we started the Smith family conference as one means of effective communication, especially of spiritual communication. Our family conference is for family members who are old enough to listen to the important messages of the gospel. We hold an opening session, priesthood and Relief Society sessions, and a concluding session, which is a testimony meeting. We are all touched by the Spirit that directs that last session. Afterward the children serve dinner to the adults and even clean up the kitchen. The hope is that we all leave filled not only with food but with a spirit that will always direct our lives. We have established regular family conferences because we feel they will keep us closely united, increase our spirituality, create more persistent family enjoyment, and strengthen our overall resolve to do what is right.

*Summer Olympics.* One year the entire extended family went to Midway, Utah, and held what we called the Smith Family Summer Olympics. We encouraged every family to design a flag, a slogan, and a logo and to prepare for the grand entry. We had activities for every age group and gave medals that represented the gold, silver, and bronze standings. The children loved the competition, and the parents and grandparents had a wonderful time. That evening after the children

were asleep, the adults talked about the gospel and its influence in our lives.

*Road rally.* Another activity was a road rally, planned by our oldest daughter, with maps to follow, speed limits to keep, a finish line to cross, and then refreshments! That was great fun for everyone, and, of course, that was the idea.

*Pioneer Day.* Since we live in Utah, one of our most beloved annual celebrations is the 24th of July, Pioneer Day. It is a time to sit and enjoy conversation with one another. The family goes to Grandma and Grandpa Smith's and then to the Days of '47 Pioneer Day parades, rodeos, and varied activities. Barbara introduced two young ladies she met there to two of our grandsons, and both sets married soon after!

*Family newsletter.* When our sons were of missionary age, we sent them off and started mailing a weekly family newsletter to keep them informed of what was going on at home. We later combined all the newsletters in a book. When our grandsons went on their missions, that further expanded our communication network. As years passed and technology progressed, so did our communication network. Now the Smith family newsletter comes via the Internet.

*Books.* Before we were great-grandparents, Barbara thought it would be helpful to grandmothers or grandmothers-to-be if she shared what she had learned about being a grandparent from her grandchildren. *Growth in Grandmothering* was a book written while Barbara felt she was somewhat new at it; after all, she had only thirty-four grandchildren at the time.

*Temple marriages.* When all those grandchildren began growing up, they naturally started getting married. To this date, Douglas has performed the temple marriages for each of his grandchildren. These marriages further enhance the unity and love we all feel as an extended family, even more so as family members begin their own families. We are now having so many great-grandchildren being born so close together that we hold baby showers for three at a time! Currently, we have seven children, thirty-nine grandchildren, and enough babies on the way to give us thirty-nine great-grandchildren. We are so grateful that these families have been sealed in the temple so they will be a part of our family forever.

## **Impact of Our Spiritual Origins**

In our Gospel Doctrine studies, we learned about our spiritual origins. President Kimball clarified the pattern of the premortal family by confirming that before we were born into mortality, we were born



spirit children of Elohim and His “wife-partner,” our spirits’ “heavenly Mother.”<sup>5</sup> This is our first family, our first parents, and this is where our spiritual lineage begins.

What a breathtaking heritage: our spirit Father and Mother are Gods! Our grandchildren sensed this heritage when they participated in the ordinance work for our fourteen hundred ancestors. Pride in their identity is strengthened as we continue our annual tradition of temple work at Christmastime. President Harold B. Lee emphatically taught that the result of a clear understanding of who we really are, *literal spirit children of Deity*, should increase our self-respect, which in turn leads us to greater righteousness and away from sin and despair.

### **Noble Spirits Held in Reserve**

We are all more than aware that we are living in the last days. For every good thing that happens, Satan increases his influence to pervert the good and use it for sin, destruction, death, war, famine, disease—more abominations than we can imagine. Nevertheless, in spite of Satan’s most concerted efforts to foil good, good still prevails. It does so because some of the most righteous souls now live on earth, souls who reject Satan’s advances and battle with the perversities that surround us.

With each rising generation, the premortally righteous are coming to earth as advancing battalions of the Lord. It will take the Lord’s finest to defeat the wicked who have hearkened to the prince of darkness. In 1932, President Wilford Woodruff said: “The Lord has chosen a small number of choice spirits of sons and daughters out of all the creations of God, who are to inherit the earth; and the company of choice spirits have been kept in the spirit world for six thousand years to come forth in the last days, to stand in the flesh in the last Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, to organize the Kingdom of God upon the earth, to build it up and to defend it.”<sup>7</sup>

In 1970, President Lee wrote of the glorious, foreordained standing of the youth of the Church: “You our youth of today are among the most illustrious spirits to be born into mortality in any age of the world. Yours is a noble heritage and a wonderful opportunity.”<sup>8</sup>

A decade later President Ezra Taft Benson said: “For nearly six thousand years, God has held you in reserve . . . [for] the final days before the Second Coming of the Lord. . . . God has saved for the final inning some of his strongest children, who will help bear off the Kingdom triumphantly. And that is where you come in, for you are the generation that must be prepared to meet your God. . . . All through the ages the

prophets have looked down through the corridors of time to our day. Billions of the deceased and those yet to be born have their eyes on us. Make no mistake about it—you are a marked generation. There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short period of time as there is of us. Never before on the face of this earth have the forces of evil and the forces of good been as well organized.”<sup>9</sup>

Who comprises the entirety of the noble reserved for these last days? As you read the above quotes, did you consider when they were made? 1932, 1970, and 1980. We have friends who are nearly sixty years old now who were present in BYU devotional assemblies when the prophets’ assertions were spoken directly to them. Most of those students are now grandparents. In those devotional assemblies, prophets and Apostles, speaking directly to the students, asserted that those students were among the noble held in reserve, were a marked generation, and would assist in carrying off the kingdom triumphantly. We, the authors, and you, the reader, are the noble spirits who were held in reserve for those nearly six thousand years.

We emphasize this nobility because, as stated early on, we can have pivotal influence in the lives of our precious and noble little ones as they grow in this earthly environment. We must believe in who we are and in our marvelous capacity to influence our grandchildren to continue developing in virtue, righteousness, and spiritual maturity so they will be able to carry out their foreordained responsibilities in furthering the kingdom. We must never forget, while we teach our grandchildren who they are, that we also are of the noble birthright.

### **Agency and the Family Pattern**

The law of agency was in effect in the premortal life. Doctrinal lessons regarding agency remind us that in the premortal setting, all spirits were not equally diligent or obedient to the premortal laws. Included among the less valiant were the rebellious who barely avoided the expulsion that happened to Lucifer and his followers. Some of those who were less valiant who have received or will receive bodies are among the diabolical soldiers in Satan’s colossal army. That army opposes Christ’s expressed work and glory, that of bringing “to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Satan continually enlists followers now with mortal bodies, to increase his evil influence and power, thinking amiss that he shall someday be victorious over Christ and all who are faithful to Him. Conversely, Christ’s legions draw from the premortal valiant who have ever sought to acquire knowledge and virtue.

Just as Satan glories in every noble soul gone astray, Christ sorrows with each loss. With that same sense of sorrow, Elder Henry B. Eyring mourned, “Even a single individual lost to the gospel of Jesus Christ closes doors for generations of descendants, unless the Lord reaches out to bring some of them back.”<sup>10</sup> The use of agency, there-



fore, has a profound effect on the pattern of the family. One poor choice can negatively affect families for generations, while a good choice can have a positive effect for generations.

### **A Grandparent’s Role in the Pattern of the Family**

Our grandchildren—these children of such promise—must be loved, guarded, and taught the gospel so that they gain their own testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ and recognize Him as their Savior and Redeemer. They must also know how important it is to use their agency to make righteous choices every day of their lives, repenting as needed and keeping themselves unspotted from the world, so they will be able to carry out their foreordained commissions. They must understand that they have that choice and yet be undeterred by evil influences.

*If ever loving, insightful grandparents were needed, they are needed*

*now*—to help grandchildren clearly comprehend their true spiritual identity and potential. What a vital, enduring gift is ours to instill with their parents that eternal truth in the minds, hearts, and spirits of our grandchildren. Indeed, our role as grandparents may be the means of keeping close, or bringing back, the precious souls of our grandchildren.

### **The Pivotal Influence of Grandparents**

As they were growing up, our children had the benefit of getting to know their loving grandparents and other relatives. These extended family members were always a part of the family and taught our children many virtues and truths by precept and example. As parents, we were appreciative of the time and talents they shared without ever supplanting us as the parents. They were invaluable at times when a child of ours was not very responsive to either parent.

We remember with fondness how Grandma Bradshaw, who was an excellent pianist, would play the songs of Zion on our piano. It was a delight to see one of our children sitting on the piano bench with her, happily singing as Grandma played. Grandma, in her wisdom, would also invite one grandchild at a time to come to her home to stay overnight. She would fix a special meal, and after they cleaned up the kitchen together they would play fun games that developed their thinking skills and helped them learn educational and spiritual concepts. Our children recall with tenderness those times with Grandma and the personal attention and love she gave them.

Grandpa Smith was also a beloved figure in the lives of our children. He had a particular knack for increasing a grandchild's self-concept and self-confidence. When one of our sons was a teenager, he wasn't always easy to reach, but Grandpa could reach him. We remember that our teen would balk at our requests, but Grandpa would work his magic and have our son out cutting, trimming, and edging the lawn as well as weeding the flower bed. More than the pay for doing the work, it was Grandpa's telling him what a fine job he had done that escalated our son's sense of worth and ability.

Another time one of our daughters had been taking piano lessons for quite a while and was making good progress. Grandpa Smith gave her a challenge with a dangling carrot. He gave her three major piano pieces to learn; if she learned all three pieces, he would give her fifty dollars (which was a lot of money back then). More than wanting the money, though, his granddaughter wanted to please her beloved grandpa. That girl worked so hard and long practicing those pieces

that her fingers ached. About then she would think of Grandpa's expectation that she really could master that music, and it gave her the motivation to persist. It took her a long time, but she finally met his challenge—and got the fifty dollars to boot.

Those are examples of pivotal grandparenting. They serve as indicators of how grandparents in any generation can be loving adjuncts to parents in their efforts to infuse character and confidence in their children. While grandparents never supersede the parents in their stewardship, they can offer soothing companionship and a unique, bonding friendship. Grandma and Grandpa can be sources of joyful, entertaining fun and vital wisdom. Their approach need not be intrusive. And Grandma's lap or Grandpa's knee is ever ready for a cherubic little one enveloped in secure arms of love—for a grandparent's love and patient acceptance are never in question.

Having and maintaining such endearing relationships with our grandchildren lays a perfect foundation for us to help train them through encouragement, storytelling, songs, poetry, games, and activities. There are so many avenues by which we can supplement and facilitate efforts in rearing those children according to gospel precepts. Sometimes, reinforcement from a dearly loved grandparent that they are children of a loving Heavenly Father can bear more weight than praise heard from someone else. Most encouraging for grandparents is the insight of Elder Neal A. Maxwell that “if we already care about those to be taught, the Lord can inspire us with any customized counsel or emphasis which may be needed.”<sup>11</sup>

### **Lifting Grandchildren to Higher Ground**

Now that we are at this grandparenting and great-grandparenting stage, we find ourselves amazed at our ever-increasing posterity and the joy each addition brings us. We have always desired, as our parents and relatives did, to do our part in nurturing our rising generations in daily gospel living. As grandparents, we know we can prove ourselves most useful in assisting in the development of immediate family members.

One example here will suffice. When our granddaughter Becky was taking piano lessons, she was frightened to perform before a crowd. Her piano teacher had her perform a special recital just for her grandparents. Of course, she performed beautifully, and all four of us were delighted. It makes us wonder just how influential our safe environment of love and approval was to Becky.

Because our second- and third-generation descendants may look to us as beacon lights, we must cast a long, bright beam of wise and happy

adherence to treasured gospel values. We can leave no doubt that we are disciples of lifelong, stalwart faith and commitment to Jesus Christ and His gospel. As the Apostle Paul counseled, “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). We must be examples because the age-old adage is true: actions speak louder than words. Only then can we hope that our beloved youth will develop in like manner, conforming their personal lives to the divine image of God.

In looking to us for righteous wisdom and examples, our grandchildren, as well as our own children, may well require Emerson’s standard: “If you would lift me, you must be on higher ground.” We hope our beloved children of all ages will believe in our ability to lift them to higher ground, and we hope the effect may increase the possibility that in our cross-generational family, no one will prove “a weak link in the chain of [our] generations.”<sup>12</sup>

### **Grandparents: Extensions of Our Grandchildren’s Homes**

We know that a defense for righteousness is the home that teaches gospel values and principles; moreover, it is a heaven-imposed responsibility. As instructed in 1 Timothy 5:4, we are to “let them learn first to shew piety at home.” Solomon’s sage advice to parents is that if we will train up our children in righteousness, they will stay true to their upbringing (see Proverbs 22:6). That process, in essence, begins when a newborn is first cradled in its mother’s waiting arms and senses her love—a perfect first lesson, “for God is love” (1 John 4:8).

As grandparents, we are extensions of the homes of every one of our posterity. Grandparents who study, love, and live according to gospel truths can speak to and teach their grandchildren by the Spirit. Because our descendants seem to come to us prepared to live righteously, it is all the more essential that they receive protection, learn gospel knowledge, and acquire the discernment that will give them reason and power to use their agency toward righteous purposes. Reinforcing with grandchildren that they are children of heavenly parents educates those precious souls about their spiritual identity and engenders high moral character even in their earliest years.

### **“A Continuation of the Seeds Forever and Ever”**

When we really contemplate what we almost cannot comprehend—that what started out as just the two of us now approaches one hundred relatives and a third generation—we have a slight glimpse of

the size of the premortal family and a better sense of “a continuation of the seeds” (D&C 132:19). President Joseph Fielding Smith, speaking of those sealed by the marriage covenant and proving faithful in mortality, clarified that those couples “will have claim on each other in eternity. Their children will belong to them, and they will have the gift of ‘a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.’”<sup>13</sup> That prophetic clarification basically brings the family pattern full circle. And with a “continuation of the seeds,” there will be grandparents galore in that celestial realm.

### **Outcomes of Endeavoring to Maintain the Eternal Family Pattern**

As we have seen, the manner, strategies, teaching, and examples by which we raised our children are now being implemented, refined, and supplemented with divinely ingenious applications in the rearing of their children and are further augmented now by the parents of our third-generation descendants. The outcome of our efforts to apply the divine family pattern and diligently and creatively try to bring up our “children in light and truth” (D&C 93:40) is clear to us, clear down to the third generation.

### **And What of These “Last Days”**

Teachers, through their deep study and prayerful seeking for the Spirit, are almost always the ones who learn most. What we have studied regarding “a pattern in all things” and the eternal pattern for families effectively encompasses and enhances our personal study of how we as grandparents can be pivotal in the lives of our posterity and in the preservation of our family legacy.

From our eight decades in our family timeline, we have learned the importance of the eternal pattern of the family, and we want our family to be complete in the eternities. As grandparents and great-grandparents, we have engaged ourselves as advocates for our offspring and as supportive sentinels for our grandchildren as they learn and apply gospel truths. Our earnest prayer is that come the final, eternal accounting, there will be, at our supernal family table, no empty chairs.<sup>14</sup> **RE**

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### **Notes**

1. Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 322.
2. Brigham Young, *Journal History*, February 23, 1847.

3. Journal History, February 23, 1847.
4. Spencer W. Kimball, "Message from the First Presidency," in *Family Home Evening* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978-79), 2.
5. Kimball, *Teachings*, 25.
6. See Harold B. Lee, "Understanding Who We Are Brings Self-Respect," *Ensign*, January 1974, 2-6.
7. Wilford Woodruff, *Our Lineage: Lessons 1 to 10 of the Course for First Year Senior Genealogical Classes* (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, n.d.), 4.
8. Harold B. Lee, *Youth and the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 169.
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12. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Keep the Chain Unbroken," in *Speeches* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Publications and Graphics, 2000), 109.
13. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972) 3:143.
14. Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, October 1970, 25, adapted from a poem by Charles Sprague.