



The First Presidency: Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, and James E. Faust

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# Lengths of Service for the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve

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How blessed we are as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to be led and instructed by inspired prophets, seers, and revelators—men who have been groomed and tutored by the Lord over many years of devoted service to the kingdom of God. The extended periods of time that our apostles and prophets serve ensure that our leaders are well schooled and seasoned in the ways of the Lord, and that they are firmly rooted in the doctrine of the Lord and “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Enos 1:1).

President Gordon B. Hinckley said concerning this topic:

Some express concern that the President of the Church is likely always to be a rather elderly man, to which my response is, “What a blessing!” The work in this dispensation was first put in place through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He was at the time young and vigorous, one whose mind was not set in the traditions of his day. His was a youthful mind which the Lord could mold as fresh, moist clay as he initiated the work.

Joseph’s successor was relatively young when he was faced with the terrible responsibility of leading an entire people across the wilderness to pioneer a new land.

But the basics of our doctrine are now well in place, and we are firmly established as a people, at least until the Lord should mandate another move. We do not need innovation. We need devotion in adherence to divinely spoken principles. We need loyalty to our leader, whom God has appointed. . . .

To my mind there is something tremendously reassuring in knowing that for the foreseeable future we shall have a President who has been disciplined and schooled, tried and tested, whose fidelity to the work and whose integrity in the cause have been tempered in the forge of service, whose faith has matured, and whose nearness to God has been cultivated over a period of many years.<sup>1</sup>

President Spencer W. Kimball reassured us that the Lord is in control of the leadership of His Church: “Full provision has been made by our Lord for changes. . . . Since the death of his servants is in the power and control of the Lord, he permits to come to the first place only the one who is destined to take that leadership. Death and life become the controlling factors.”<sup>2</sup>

President Hinckley has served as the President of the Church since March 1995, and no changes in the membership of the First Presidency or the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have occurred during that period. This article presents information dealing with long periods during which there have been no changes in these quorums.



The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve  
Courtesy Church Archives

### No Changes in the First Presidency or Quorum of the Twelve

Listed below are the ten longest periods without a change in the First Presidency or Quorum of the Twelve, beginning with the longest period:

Length of Period	Dates of Period	Church President; President of the Quorum of the Twelve
8 yrs 9 mo	12 Mar 1995–present	Gordon B. Hinckley; Thomas S. Monson
6 yrs 6 mo	7 Oct 1989–6 Apr 1996	Wilford Woodruff; Lorenzo Snow
6 yrs 0 mo	28 May 1925–16 May 1931	Heber J. Grant; Rudger Clawson
5 yrs 10 mo	26 Aug 1860–1 Jul 1866	Brigham Young; Orson Hyde
5 yrs 5 mo	6 Oct 1988–25 Feb 1994	Ezra Taft Benson; Howard W. Hunter
5 yrs 1 mo	12 Feb 1849–11 Mar 1854	Brigham Young; Orson Hyde
4 yrs 11 mo	8 Dec 1911–18 Nov 1916	Joseph F. Smith; Francis M. Lyman
4 yrs 2 mo	17 Mar 1921–15 May 1925	Heber J. Grant; Rudger Clawson
3 yrs 10 mo	8 Apr 1954–11 Feb 1958	David O. McKay; Joseph F. Smith
3 yrs 4 mo	8 Aug 1950–10 Apr 1974	George Albert Smith; George F. Richards

Item of interest: On September 2, 2003, Elder David B. Haight became the oldest living Apostle at age 97.

### No Changes in the First Presidency

Listed below are the ten longest periods without a change in the members of the First Presidency, beginning with the longest period.

Length of Period	Dates of Period	Members of the First Presidency
10 yrs 7 mo	6 Oct 1934–14 May 1945	Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark Jr., David O. McKay
9 yrs 6 mo	4 Jan 1857–1 Jul 1866	Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Daniel H. Wells
9 yrs 5 mo	7 Apr 1889–2 Sep 1898	Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith
8 yrs 9 mo	12 Mar 1995–present	Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, James E. Faust
8 yrs 7 mo	10 Nov 1985–30 May 1994	Ezra T. Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson
8 yrs 5 mo	17 Oct 1901–27 Mar 1910	Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, Anthon H. Lund
8 yrs 1 mo	9 Apr 1951–19 May 1959	David O. McKay, Stephen L. Richards, J. Reuben Clark Jr.
8 yrs 7 mo	30 Dec 1973–23 Jul 1981	Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner, Marion G. Romney
7 yrs 0 mo	7 Dec 1911–19 Nov 1918	Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, Charles W. Penrose
6 yrs 10 mo	10 Oct 1880–25 Jul 1887	John Taylor, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith

## No Changes in the Quorum of the Twelve

Listed below are the ten longest periods without a change in the Quorum of the Twelve, beginning with the longest period. During some of these periods, the seniority of members of the Twelve changed—but not the Brethren serving in the quorum (the 1870 to 1878 period is an example of this).

Length of Period	Dates of Period	Church President; President of the Quorum of the Twelve
10 yrs 2 mo	17 Mar 1921–16 May 1931	Heber J. Grant; Rudger Clawson
8 yrs 9 mo	12 Mar 1995–present	Gordon B. Hinckley; Thomas S. Monson
8 yrs 5 mo	3 Jul 1870–28 Nov 1878	Brigham Young; Orson Hyde, and John Taylor
7 yrs 1 mo	26 Aug 1860–6 Oct 1867	Brigham Young; Orson Hyde
6 yrs 6 mo	7 Oct 1889–6 Apr 1896	Wilford Woodruff; Lorenzo Snow
6 yrs 3 mo	4 Oct 1963–18 Jan 1970	David O. McKay; Joseph Fielding Smith
5 yrs 5 mo	6 Oct 1988–25 Feb 1994	Ezra Taft Benson; Howard W. Hunter
5 yrs 1 mo	12 Feb 1849–11 Mar 1854	Brigham Young; Orson Hyde
4 yrs 11 mo	8 Dec 1911–18 Nov 1916	Joseph F. Smith; Francis M. Lyman
3 yrs 10 mo	8 Apr 1954–11 Feb 1958	David O. McKay; Joseph F. Smith



The Quorum of the Twelve: (front row, left to right) Boyd K. Packer, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, Neal A. Maxwell; (back row, left to right) Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Richard G. Scott, Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland, Henry B. Eyring.

Photo by Jed Clark

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## Notes

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “He Slumbers Not, nor Sleeps,” *Ensign*, May 1983, 6–7.
2. Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 464.