

ORDAIN WOMEN

Productive Conversations Toolkit



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Discussion Guide	1 - 4
Setting Boundaries	5 - 7
Common Questions	8 - 9
Examples	10 - 19
Scriptures and Quotations	20 - 33
Additional Resources	34 - 35

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Prepare to effectively and confidently engage in conversations with leaders and peers about Ordain Women and the ordination of LDS women.

Just got called in to meet with your church leaders? Consider the following as you prepare for the discussion.

Confrontation arises when opinions vary, stakes are high, or emotions are strong. In order to achieve an amicable resolution, avoiding an intensely emotional confrontation and power struggle is in your best interest.

Conflict de-escalation skills can be leveraged to accomplish goals in the short-term and the long-term. In the short-term, your goals are:

- Intervention--mediate the pressing point of conflict
- Shift the relationship--away from the adversarial
- Avoid discipline

In the long-term, your goals are:

- Prevention--avoid inciting a confrontation
- Build the relationship--foster goodwill and understanding
- Problem resolution--come to an understanding on the issue

Anti-Goal: Winning

Approaching a meeting with church leaders as something you can “win” sets you up for conflict instead of cooperation.

Remember!

When emotions are escalated, it is not a time for debate, defense, reasoning, teaching, or problem solving. Instead, focus on lowering the level of emotional arousal before working towards a resolution.

Tools

Preparation

- Pray for guidance and peace
- Study the scriptures
- Acquaint yourself with Christian and church history

Manage yourself first

- Take deep breaths
- Speak in a calm tone of voice
- Use confident, but non-threatening body language
- Allow for space in the room and silences in the conversation
- Resist the urge to defend
- Enter with conviction *and* humility

Assess

- Don't assume
- Continuously monitor the level of arousal
- Understand the scope and limits of your relationship
- Ask for their specific concerns or definition of the problem

Show respect

- Pay attention
- Avoid judging
- Listen more than you talk
- Ask questions
- Set boundaries
- Apologize when appropriate
 - “I’m sorry *if* you’re upset.” NO!
 - “I’m sorry *that* you’re upset.” YES!

Speak carefully

- Modulate your tone
- Humanize yourself/build the relationship
- Ignore argumentative questions
- Let them lead the conversation
- Address their concerns, not ancillary issues
- Return to or find points of agreement
- Reflective questioning--clarify
- Seek mutual purpose

Useful phrases to remember:

“You might be right.”

“I will keep praying about this.”

“From my perspective, I’ve been concerned about ...”

“Thank you. I’ll think about that.”

“Please be patient with me as I work this out.”

EXAMPLE:

Bishop questions your worthiness to hold a temple recommend

Identify goals: 1) keep your temple recommend 2) continue to support LDS women’s ordination

Consider that your Bishop’s strong feelings on women’s ordination or OW are not likely to change in the near future. Focus the conversation on your desire to hold a temple recommend, attend and serve in the temple, connect to God, strengthen your testimony, find answers, etc. You are unlikely to accomplish your goals by making this a debate or questioning the Bishop’s judgment and authority. He is questioning your worthiness to hold a temple recommend because of your support of OW, but don’t fall into the trap of arguing about women’s ordination. Continually redirect the conversation to your faith in the gospel and your desire to be in the temple.

Post meeting analysis

- Was the interaction respectful and dignified?
- Were you upbeat, positive, and honest?
- Were both individuals’ needs met?
- Do you need to move up the chain of authority?
- If your leader is in contact with other leaders about you, can you arrange to be a part of those conversations or speak to these other leaders directly?

SETTING BOUNDARIES

Prepare to set and maintain healthy boundaries for your interactions and relationships with leaders and others.

Boundaries are essential to healthy relationships. It may seem daunting to set and maintain boundaries with those who occupy positions of authority or within the close-knit community of many LDS wards, but in reality it is particularly important in such contexts to uphold interpersonal boundaries. Setting boundaries is a skill that takes courage, practice, and support. As you work to build better boundaries, consider the following guidance.

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION

It is common to feel guilt, fear, or self-doubt for setting and preserving boundaries. You may have been taught to consider the needs of others above your own. You may have a history of allowing yourself to become physically or emotionally drained as you work to meet someone else's needs or desires. You may feel that there are people to whom you owe deference.

Boundaries are a sign of a healthy relationship. Boundaries are a sign of self-respect. Give yourself permission to set boundaries and preserve them.

DEFINE YOUR LIMITS

Identify what you need. This could be information, clarification, more or less space, accountability, etc. Identify your physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual limits. Set boundaries that protect you from exceeding those limits. For example, you may decide not to schedule meetings without an agenda, prefer to speak to church leaders in your home, or set time limits for the duration of difficult conversations.

TUNE INTO YOUR FEELINGS

Pay attention to your emotional responses during interactions with others. This will enable you to prevent the conversation from escalating into a heated argument or a loss of self-control because you can redirect, reschedule, or end the interaction before reaching such a point. Even when the interaction is not emotionally fraught, tuning into your feelings is vital to identifying cues that your boundaries are being pressed or violated. Specifically, feelings of either resentment or discomfort can indicate that a boundary has been crossed. Resentment will typically arise when one feels taken advantage of, unappreciated, or imposed upon by someone else's expectations or values. Discomfort could come from many possible sources and so it is often helpful to ask, "What about this situation is causing me to feel uncomfortable?"

BE DIRECT AND FIRM

You cannot assume that another individual instinctively understands what your boundaries are in any given situation, even if the two of you have shared many interactions in the past. Be straightforward in asserting your needs or preferences so that others know how to regulate their own behavior to respect your limits. Consider asking others to clarify their boundaries so that you can respect them in turn.

When you clearly state what you will or will not do, it is important to remain calm and ignore the temptation to justify or apologize for setting the boundary. Remember that fewer words are usually more effective.

This advice also holds true when communicating about the ways in which someone has violated your boundaries. Being clear about the particular problem enables you to address it together.

RESPONSIBILITY

Ask yourself, “What can I control?” Set healthy boundaries for yourself and only yourself. You cannot control someone else’s response and their response is not your responsibility. Communicate clearly and respectfully. Remember that other people must govern themselves.

START SMALL

Unhealthy boundaries are not developed in a day and healthy boundaries will not develop overnight. It is a process that requires a willingness to learn and grow. The lifelong work of creating healthy relationships is best tackled by first communicating a small boundary that does not feel threatening and, subsequently, incrementally increasing to more challenging boundaries.

SELF-CARE

Make your well-being a priority. Honor your feelings and be honest with yourself about what makes you happy and unhappy. You will be better equipped to meet the needs of others when you ensure that your own needs have been met. If you are having difficulty setting or preserving boundaries, seek support from friends or trusted advisors and seek constructive feedback as you practice these skills.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Consider how you might answer these commonly asked questions.

Questions you may be asked:

- Do you have a testimony of God and Jesus Christ?
- Do you have a testimony of the gospel?
- Do you sustain the leaders of the Church?
- Do you keep the commandments?
- Have you been to the temple?
- Do you feel worthy to hold a temple recommend?
- Why is ordination necessary for women in the LDS church?
- Men and women have different, but equal roles. Isn't that enough?
- How do you think ordaining women would affect the Church?
- Don't women have enough to do already?
- Won't men be obsolete if women also hold the priesthood?
- Why are you making your concerns and criticisms public instead of handling the issue privately?
- Have you considered the effect your actions might have on the testimony of others?
- What effect will your behavior have on your children? Your parents?
- Are the supporters of Ordain Women active members of the LDS church?
- How do you know that we haven't already been given an answer?
- What will you do if the answer is no?
- Do you think women who don't want the priesthood are less spiritual?
- How can you sustain the prophet and support women's ordination?
- What changes can the branch/ward/stake make to better include women?

EXAMPLES

The following are examples of interactions Ordain Women supporters have had with their local Church leaders. Use these experiences as guidance for your own discussions.

EXPERIENCE A

My bishop called me in to speak to him about my Ordain Women profile a couple months after the site launched. It went well, I think. He let me know that he saw my profile at Ordain Women two months previous and that he and the stake president discussed it and agreed that there was nothing wrong with me expressing my opinion on the matter at the OW website. The stake president said it wasn't necessary to talk to me about it, and so he didn't at first, but now he was wondering if there was anything I wanted talk about.

I first let him know that I do not think it is appropriate to teach my personal opinions in the context of my church callings and that I felt like I had a good track record for avoiding controversial material in the lessons I give. He said he appreciated that and that he had never heard any complaints about any of my lessons at church.

He seemed interested in understanding why I feel the way I do about women's ordination, particularly if I felt like men were mistreating women in the ward. He was concerned about the bad experience I had with my district leader that I wrote about in my Ordain Women profile. I clarified that I do not have a problem with any of the men currently serving in my ward and most of the issues that concern me are broad, systemic issues that cannot be addressed at the local level. I shared the All Are Alike document with him and pointed out some of the things that concern me about current church wide policies.

He wanted to be sure that I understood that church leaders do not encourage male chauvinistic behavior. I agreed with him that church leaders do value women and clearly do not wish for men to devalue women, but that unfortunately, church policies that exclude women make it easier for male chauvinists to behave badly and more difficult for males who want female input to actually get it.

The bishop asked me if there was anything he could do to make the ward more woman-friendly. The only suggestion I could come up with for improvement at the local level is that we stop always having men always speak last.

Then we closed by saying that he had read much of the OW website and was comfortable with its tone, but cautioned me to be careful continue to maintain a positive tone as I question church stances and to avoid speaking of church leaders in a derogatory way. I agreed that this was good advice.

EXPERIENCE B

Three days before the ordain women priesthood session action, my stake president left a message for me asking if he could meet with me and my husband that night. I called back and left a message saying that I could not get a babysitter so quickly but that I could come by myself or we could plan a different time. We ended up meeting the week following the priesthood session action.

My stake president began by saying that he talked with my bishop about my involvement in Ordain Women and they agreed that this was not an issue related to my temple recommend or other disciplinary action but that he did want to share some thoughts with me. He asked if I had anything to say first. I told him that I love the church that I've invested lots of time and church callings and that I want the church to succeed. I said that I was concerned about how many of the policies and practices of the church are biased toward men and that I believe the best way to address these problems would be to ordain women, which is why I participate in a group that is asking the brethren to prayerfully consider the ordination of women. The stake president told me that he knows many of the brethren personally and has complete faith in them and does not believe church policies are biased toward men. I agreed with him that the brethren are good people and that they care about women. However, I pointed out that it is impossible for women's opinions to be considered when they are not even present. I used High Councils as an example. While I believe that the stake president and members of the High Council care about women, it is not possible for them to give as much consideration to women's concerns as to men's during High Council meetings because women are not present to voice their opinions.

The stake president bore his testimony that “all church policy is inspired.” He told me he had a concern and he wanted me to consider how my actions would affect the testimonies of others, particularly my own children and the people I serve at church. He said that although he did not think my actions indicated a lack of testimony or a lack of support for the brethren, other people would interpret it that way. If ward members lost faith in me because of perceptions that I did not support the brethren, it may compromise my capacity to serve in leadership positions. I wondered if this was a veiled threat to release me from my calling, but I chose not to ask about it because the tone of the meeting was friendly and the stake president had already assured me that he was not seeking to discipline me. In retrospect, I think just listening and not trying to contend this point was the right decision.

I told him that this was something that I would continue to consider seriously. I told him that my calling was very important to me. Part of the reason I am participating in this movement is because I care so much about participating in the church the

fullest extent possible. I also let him know that I am concerned about the messages my children receive as we raise them in a church where women do not have equal opportunity with men. While church leaders frequently tell women that they have equal value, children also learn from actions and they notice the many ways women are excluded in the church. I am prayerfully working on the right way to balance the messages I send my children so they understand that I love the church but also that I value girls as much as boys.

EXPERIENCE C

There are things that I said that I feel really helped the leaders to be more comfortable with my affiliation with OW. I said that I have a testimony of the prophet, and I don't see how what I am doing is in opposition to him or to the church in general. I love the gospel and the church and my motives for being in Ordain Women are positive--I want to help make the church a more loving and inclusive place. If I wanted to tear down the church, I would leave it.

In answer to the question of "what if the prophet says no," I said I will pray about that to get confirmation if it is of the Lord (as I believe we should do after any spiritual guidance/counsel from leaders, like Christofferson spoke about in one of his more recent conference addresses), and once/if I receive that confirmation I will move on.

I am not going after power. I don't expect the priesthood to be extended to me in my lifetime per se, but I am hopeful for my daughters, granddaughters and females of following generations. I admit that I am able currently to receive many blessings from the priesthood, I am grateful for that, and I believe that priesthood is a real power. I also believe that holding the priesthood is a transformative power, one that has changed the men in my life and will surely encourage my son to do good . . . I just want to know why my daughter can't also have that transformative power.

I have many questions and do not claim to have any answers. I acknowledge that the prophet is the only person who can speak for the entire church and I am hopeful that one day HE will address this issue after taking it up with the Lord through prayer.

Since Ordain Women has a bad rep with some, I explained that I don't necessarily agree with every other person on Ordain Women. We are a group of individuals and you will find diversity of motives and beliefs in any organization. However, I feel comfortable in the moment supporting Ordain Women because I don't feel it is presently against or contrary to the church. In fact, asking questions is part of our unique Mormon heritage. At the same time, I pledge no allegiance to Ordain Women and if they ever do anything that I am no longer comfortable with, I would be happy to withdraw, but will wait until that moment comes and not leave prematurely out of fear of supposed future actions that may or may not happen.

While I appreciated the talks at conference that addressed the priesthood, they left me with more questions than answers. I do wonder what it is about women that makes them incapable of "opening the drapes" and I would love to have real revelation (words that claim to be from God) on the matter. I am hopeful for this and believe with all my heart it is possible once the membership is ready.

I'm not trying to get other members of the ward to join in my efforts, but I am standing up for my personal beliefs and being authentic. I respect the rights of others in the ward to feel differently than me and appreciate when other ward members offer me the same respect, including my leaders.

EXPERIENCE D

I was really afraid to meet with my bishop. I knew he had seen some of my online involvement with Ordain Women and he also knew that I was struggling with feelings of inequality in the Church. While I felt very strongly about my position on women and the priesthood, I also highly value my membership and involvement in the Church. I decided that I wanted this interview to be on my terms, so I set up an interview with him rather than waiting to be called in.

As we met together, we talked about my feelings regarding Ordain Women. He had already read a lot of what I had written about the October Priesthood Session Action, so we mostly discussed some of those points in depth. I talked about how much of the spirit I felt in my conversations about and with OW. Our scheduled 20 minute interview turned into an hour-long discussion about the history of women's role in the Church, President Hinckley's interview with David Ransom and the statement about agitation, the need to have conversations move higher in the hierarchy, and the process of revelation both personal and for the Church. What I had anticipated to be a scary and negative conversation was a beautiful reminder to me of how even in disagreement, we can revel on common ground.

It's natural for priesthood leaders to take it personally when we suggest that things need to change. It's taken to feel like *they* are the problem. And they're not (or, at least, hopefully they're not). I tried to help him see that I value my leaders' time and service and that my desire for women's ordination is not due to the fact that they—or men—are just messing things up.

When I talked about how I valued my membership and didn't want to do anything to put my standing in jeopardy, it became obvious that my goal was not to hurt the Church, but to be a part of helping it. As much as you can at this time in your life, engage with your ward in activities, church attendance, service, etc. When leaders tangibly see that you wish to be part of the fold, it is natural for them to see you as a member among members, rather than an outside attacker.

I strongly encourage being acquainted with the history of women in the church, the early Christian church, biblical accounts of females operating in what is now considered "male priesthood" realms, the history of the 1978 revelation, female healers, women's role in the temple, etc. But, as much as theological and historical information is helpful as a reference, sharing your own experiences when inequality in the Church was hurtful or harmful to you, can be very moving and helps illustrate why you are personally motivated. I find that historical/doctrinal arguments can be easily argued as it's mutual territory, but only you own your experiences.

Have the spirit with you. Pray to know what to say and how to engage with your leaders. I find some good ol' Come, Come Ye Saints prior to conversations with leaders always fills my cup.

I had such a lovely conversation and interaction with my Bishop. I know that these conversations are huge stepping points in helping the cause of women and the priesthood. Whether easy or hard, they are getting the conversation going.

EXPERIENCE E

My Stake President asked to meet with me a few days before October 2013 General Conference. I texted and asked for the agenda of the meeting and received this response, "I would like to visit with you about your opinion on the Priesthood Session of General Conference. Do you mind?"

He wanted to hear about my concerns and to hear what I thought about women wanting to attend the Priesthood session because he couldn't understand it. I asked if we could start with a prayer. We knelt and I prayed to Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother, asking them for the spirit of love and understanding.

He said he knows there are other women in the stake who think like me, but they don't come to him. He wanted me to represent those women and tell him how I felt. I talked about the power of the priesthood to bless others and said that was something that I saw would bless women. I reminded him that the priesthood has been expanded and that revelations come when we ask for them. I asked him to pray to understand what I said and see what God said, because I think God wants this kind of equality.

I told him about my pain with patriarchy and the variety of injustices that women suffer in the church. He sees this injustice and gave me an example of a stake meeting when the Young Men were planning a High Adventure trip. He asked the Young Women President how she felt about all of this money and attention being focused on the Young Men. He said she bit her lip and said it was hard for her. In hindsight, I could have asked how he resolved the issue, but I guess him being aware of it is promising.

I explained that I see Relief Society as a male-dominated meeting. I don't think he'd thought of that before. I told him about my feminist awakening when I realized that women aren't seen as spiritual leaders in Mormonism. He said he'd have to think about that more. He had a grandmother who raised 15 children by herself and she was his spiritual leader. I said that it seems we have men as spiritual leaders publicly and women as spiritual leaders privately. But we should have both. He agreed.

He asked me if I think women already have the priesthood, and I said that some of my friends do, but even if we have it, we don't talk about it and can't use it, so it's at best just a potential blessing.

He mentioned that he wants to be perceived as doing the right thing when it comes to women. I told him that his language gave him away. It's not about women feeling equal; it's about women actually being equal. I was pretty proud of myself for

feeling confident enough to say this, but I'm not sure he understood the nuance. He asked what changes I would like to see in the church, and I said that we could talk about that at length, from small to large changes, but in the end I'd like to see women included in all levels of decision-making.

At this point, it got a little disappointing. First, he said that I wanted sameness. Then he put on his Stake President hat and asked in a patronizing tone, "Who makes the decisions in your home?" Of course I answered that my husband and I both do. He asked about us being the Patriarch and Matriarch of the home. I rejected those labels and we were at an impasse, but he circled back to his point: that all leaders make decisions in consultation with their wives. I mentioned that he probably didn't talk to his wife about certain sensitive church issues. Anyway, the fact that he could think that's really the model for how women can be involved in decision-making is really baffling to me.

Overall, though, it went really well, I didn't feel judged by him and I feel like we could talk about additional ideas and that he would consider some of them. He left the door open to have more meetings, and I think I'll be better organized.

SCRIPTURES AND QUOTATIONS

These inspired words may help you as you seek your own understanding and in finding common ground with other Church members. Avoid using these verses and quotations to construct an argument; instead, use them to uplift and build consensus.

SCRIPTURES

Numbers 27:1-8

- ¹ Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these *are* the names of his daughters; Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah.
- ² And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, *by* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying,
- ³ Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons.
- ⁴ Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us *therefore* a possession among the brethren of our father.
- ⁵ And Moses brought their cause before the LORD.
- ⁶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
- ⁷ The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them.
- ⁸ And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.

Jeremiah 33:3

- ³ Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

Matthew 7:7-12

- ⁷ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
- ⁸ For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

⁹ Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

¹⁰ Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

¹¹ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

¹² Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Luke 11:9-13

⁹ And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

¹⁰ For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

¹¹ If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

¹² Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

¹³ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Acts 10:34

⁴ Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons;

1 Corinthians 12:25-31

²⁵ That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

²⁶ And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

²⁷ Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

²⁸ And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

²⁹ *Are* all apostles? *are* all prophets? *are* all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles?

³⁰ Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

³¹ But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Galatians 3:26-29

²⁶ For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

²⁷ For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

²⁹ And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Philippians 4:6-8

⁶ Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

⁷ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

James 1:5-7

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

⁶ But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

⁷ For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

1 John 15:13

¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

¹⁵ And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

2 Nephi 26:33

³³ For none of these iniquities come of the Lord; for he doeth that which is good among the children of men; and he doeth nothing save it be plain unto the children of men; and he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile.

2 Nephi 28:24-30

²⁴ Therefore, wo be unto him that is at ease in Zion!

²⁵ Wo be unto him that crieth: All is well!

²⁶ Yea, wo be unto him that hearkeneth unto the precepts of men, and denieth the power of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost!

²⁷ Yea, wo be unto him that saith: We have received, and we need no more!

²⁸ And in fine, wo unto those who tremble, and are angry because of the truth of God! For behold, he that is built upon the rock receiveth it with gladness; and he that is built upon a sandy foundation trembleth lest he shall fall.

²⁹ Wo be unto him that shall say: We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God for we have enough!

³⁰ For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have.

Ether 12:6

⁶ And now, I, Moroni, would speak somewhat concerning these things; I would show unto the world that faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.

D&C 30:11

¹¹ And your whole labor shall be in Zion, with all your soul, from henceforth; yea, you shall ever open your mouth in my cause, not fearing what man can do, for I am with you. Amen.

Articles of Faith 1:9

⁹ We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

QUOTATIONS

Belle Smith Spafford, "Relief Society: A conversation with Belle S. Spafford" *Ensign*, June 1974

"Tremendous changes . . . have taken place in the social, economic, industrial, and educational, life of most countries in the world since Relief Society was founded. And I don't think any change in the world has been more significant than the change in the status of women. At the time the Relief Society was founded, a woman's world was her home, her family, and perhaps a little community service. Today a woman's world is as broad as the universe. There's scarcely an area of human endeavor that a woman cannot enter if she has the will and preparation to do so."

Brigham Young

"The object of this existence is to learn, which we can only do a little at a time."

Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* p. 490

"If all things operated by law, and they do; if God is no respecter of persons, and certainly he is perfectly impartial; if his course is one eternal round, never varying from age to age, and such truly is the case--then all of the gifts and graces and revelations ever given to any prophet, seer, or revelator in any age will be given again to any soul who obeys the law entitling him so to receive."

Carole M. Stephens, "Do we know what we have?" General Conference, Oct. 2013

"Daughters of God, do we know who we are? . . . Are we worthy to receive the power and blessings of the priesthood?"

Chieko Okazaki, *Lighten Up!*, 1993

"Be spiritually independent enough that your relationship with the savior doesn't depend on your circumstances or what other people say and do. Have the spiritual independence to be a Mormon--the best mormon you can--in your own way. Not the bishop's way. Not the Relief Society president's way. Your way."

“Diversity is a strength. I attend a lot of meetings where I’m the only woman. And I attend many, many meetings where I’m the only Oriental woman. Have you ever had the feeling that you’re the odd one, the different one? Maybe even too odd or different for this church? The truth is that you’re not—you’re special. When white light falls on a wall, it makes a white wall. But when it passes through a prism, that same light makes a rainbow on the wall . . . “Let there be light.” All kinds of light! Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet light. We need our differences.

“Hooray for differences! Without them, there would be no harmony. In principles, great clarity. In practices, great charity.”

Chieko Okazaki, *Cat’s Cradle*, 1993

“Reasons to stay: the value of diversity: if you experience the pain of exclusion at church from someone who is frightened at your difference, please don’t leave [or] become inactive. You may think you are voting with your feet, that you are making a statement by leaving. [Some may] see your diversity as a problem to be fixed, as a flaw to be corrected or erased. If you are gone, they don’t have to deal with you anymore. I want you to know that your diversity is a more valuable statement.”

Chieko Okazaki, BYU Women’s Conference

“[Jesus is] not waiting for us to be perfect. Perfect people don’t need a Savior. He came to save his people in their imperfections. He is the Lord of the living, and the living make mistakes. He’s not embarrassed by us, angry at us, or shocked. He wants us in our brokenness, in our unhappiness, in our guilt and our grief.”

Chieko Okazaki, *Disciples*, 1998

“I do think we should struggle for understanding just as hard as we can. It’s not showing a lack of faith to say, ‘I don’t understand this. Tell me how. Explain why.’”

Dallin H. Oaks, “Priesthood authority in the family and the church” Ensign, Nov. 2005

“The priesthood is the power of God used to bless all of His children, male and female. Some of our abbreviated expressions, like “the women and the priesthood,” convey an erroneous idea. Men are not “the priesthood.” Priesthood meeting is a meeting of those who hold and exercise the priesthood. The blessings of the, such as baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, the temple endowment, and eternal marriage, are available to men and women alike.”

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The merciful obtain mercy” General Conference, April 2012

“But when it comes to our own prejudices and grievances, we too often justify our anger as righteous and our judgment as reliable and only appropriate. Though we cannot look into another’s heart, we assume that we know a bad motive or even a bad person when we see one.”

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Come, join with us” General Conference, Oct. 2013

“In this Church that honors personal agency so strongly, that was restored by a young man who asked questions and sought answers, we respect those who honestly search for truth. It may break our hearts when their journey takes them away from the Church we love and the truth we have found, but we honor their right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own conscience, just as we claim that privilege for ourselves.”

“There is room for you here.”

“In this age of waning faith—in this age when so many feel distanced from heaven’s embrace—here you will find a people who yearn to know and draw closer to their Savior by serving God and fellowmen, just like you. Come, join with us!”

“With our heart and soul we yearn to become better with the help of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. If these are your desires, then regardless of your circumstances, your personal history, or the strength of your testimony, there is room for you in this Church. Come, join with us!”

“There are few members of the Church who, at one time or another, have not wrestled with serious or sensitive questions. One of the purposes of the Church is to nurture and cultivate the seed of faith—even in the sometimes sandy soil of doubt and uncertainty. Faith is to hope for things which are not seen but which are true.”

Emmeline B. Wells, “Life Lessons” *Women’s Exponent*, Oct. 1, 1985, 70

“It is the opinion of many who are wise and learned that women’s mission upon the earth in maternity, with its minor details, its accompanying cares and anxieties, and in needful exigencies; that these fill the measure of her creation; and when this is done, she should with becoming matronly dignity, retire from the sphere of active life and gracefully welcome old age. . . . That motherhood brings into a woman’s life a richness, zest, and tone that nothing else ever can I gladly grant you, but that her usefulness ends there, or that she has no other individual interests to serve I cannot so readily concede.”

Emmeline B. Wells, *Relief Society President Diary*, Jan. 4, 1878

“I believe in women. I desire to do all in my power to help elevate the condition of my people, especially women . . . to do those things that would advance women in moral and spiritual, as well as educational work and tend to the rolling on of the work of God upon the earth.”

George Q. Cannon

“If God deprives His children of any present blessing, it is so that He may bestow upon them a greater and more glorious one by and by.”

Gerald Causee, “Ye are no more strangers” General Conference, Oct. 2013

“As members of the Church we are admitted into the house of Israel. We become brothers and sisters, equal heirs to the same spiritual lineage.”

“In this church, our wards and our quorums do not belong to us. They belong to Jesus Christ. Whoever enters our meeting houses should feel at home. The responsibility to welcome everyone has growing importance.”

“So, my brothers, it is your duty to reach out to anyone who appears at the doors of your church buildings.”

Gib Kocherhans, “The name ‘Melchizedek’: some thoughts on its meaning and the priesthood it represents” *Ensign*, Sept. 1980

“The priesthood is “without father, without mother, . . . having neither beginning of days nor end of life” (Heb 7:3), nor maleness nor femaleness. It is head to them both. Male and female alike come under it and must understand their true relationship to it, one to serve as priest within it, the other eventually as a priestess.”

Gordon B. Hinckley, "Gordon Hinckley: Distinguished Religious Leader of the Mormons" *Larry King Live*, 8.9.1998

Caller: Yes. Since we're getting into the 21st century, President Hinckley, what is the chance that women may hold a priesthood in the Mormon church?

GB: Well, they don't hold the priesthood at the present time. It would take another revelation to bring that about.

Gordon B. Hinckley, "Interview with President Gordon B. Hinckley" *Compass*, 11.9.1997

David Ransom: Is it possible that the rules could change in the future as the rules are on Blacks?

Gordon B. Hinckley: He could change them yes. If He were to change them that's the only way it would happen.

DR: So you'd have to get a revelation?

GBH: Yes. But there's no agitation for that. We don't find it.

Henry B. Eyring, "Bind up their wounds" General Conference, Oct. 2013

"Our human tendency is to be impatient with the person who cannot see the truth that is so plain to us. We must be careful that our impatience is not interpreted as condemnation or rejection."

Joseph Smith

"I believe all that God ever revealed, and I never hear of a man being damned for believing too much; but they are damned for unbelief."

Joseph Smith, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 509.

"Our heavenly Father is more liberal in His views, and boundless in His mercies and blessings, than we are ready to believe or receive."

Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:425

"The best way to obtain truth and wisdom is not to ask from books, but to go to God in prayer, and obtain divine teaching."

Joseph Smith, *Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book*, Mar. 30 1842, 22

"Said he was going to make of this Society a kingdom of priests as in Enoch's day--as in Paul's day."

Joseph Fielding Smith, “Relief Society--An aid to the Priesthood” Relief Society General Conference, Oct. 1958

“It is within the privilege of the sisters of this Church to receive exaltation in the kingdom of God and receive authority and power as queens and priestesses, and I am sure if they have that power they have some power to rule and reign. Else why would they be priestesses?”

Mary Ellen Smoot, “We are instruments in the hands of God” Ensign, Nov. 2000

“Truly, we may each be an instrument in the hands of God. Happily, we need not all be the same kind of instrument. Just as instruments in an orchestra differ in size, shape, and sound, we too are different from one another. We have different talents and inclinations, but just as the French horn cannot duplicate the sound of piccolo, neither is it necessary for us to all serve the Lord in the same way. Sister Eliza R. Snow said that “there is no sister so isolated and her sphere so narrow but what she can do a great deal towards establishing the Kingdom of God upon the earth.” Our privilege and our responsibility as daughters of God and as sisters of Relief Society, then, is to become the most effective instruments we can be.”

M. Russell Ballard, BYU Education Week Devotional Address, Aug. 2013

“When men and women go to the temple, they are both endowed with the same power, which by definition is priesthood power.”

Neil L. Andersen, “Trial of your faith” General Conference, Oct. 2012

“When you are faced with a test of faith, stay within the safety and security of the household of God. There is always a place for you here. No trial is so large we can’t overcome it together.”

Neil L. Andersen, “Power in the Priesthood” General Conference, Oct. 2013

“While there are many things we do know about the priesthood, seeing through the lens of mortality does not always give a complete understanding of the workings of God.”

Patricia T. Holland, “One thing needful: Becoming women of greater faith in Christ”
Ensign, Oct. 1987

“In our diversity and individuality, my prayer is that we will be united--united in seeking our specific, foreordained mission, united in asking . . . “How can I fulfill the measure of my creation? In my circumstances and with my challenges and my faith, where is my full realization of the godly image in which I was created?” With faith in God, his prophets, his church, and ourselves--with faith in our own divine creation--may we be peaceful and let go of our cares and troubles over so many things. May we believe--nothing doubting--in the light that shines, even in a dark place.”

“Obviously the Lord has created us with different personalities, as well as differing degrees of energy, interest, health, talent, and opportunity. So as long as we are committed to righteousness and living a life of faithful devotion, we should celebrate these divine difference, knowing they are a gift from God.”

“We must have the courage to be imperfect while striving for perfection.”

“Often we fail to consider the glorious possibility within our own souls. We need to remember that divine promise, “The Kingdom of God is within you,” (Luke 17:21). Perhaps we forget the the kingdom of God is within us because too much attention is given to our outer shell, this human body of ours, and the frail, too-flimsy world in which it moves.”

Rex E. Lee, “Women and the power within” Women’s Conference, 1990

“In order “to grow in wisdom and knowledge” and to become like God, who is omnipotent, all-powerful, we are told that each of us--man and woman--must grow in power.”

Ruth Todd, spokesperson for the LDS Church

<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/news/56963037-78/women-mormon-church-priesthood.html.csp>

“[T]hese are our sisters and we want them among us, and we hope they will find the peace and joy we all seek in the gospel.”

Sheri L. Dew, “It is not good for man or woman to be alone” Ensign, Nov. 2001

“Such a circle of support has no end, because there is no end to the good works of righteous men and women who respect each other and who thrust in their sickles and reap, side by side, in the Lord’s vineyard.”

Spencer W. Kimball in a letter to his son,

“Revelations will probably never come unless they are desired. I think few people receive revelations while lounging on the couch or while playing cards or while relaxing. I believe most revelations would come when a man is on his tip toes, reaching as high as he can for something which he knows he needs, and then their bursts upon him the answer to his problems.”

Thomas S. Monson, “The call to serve” General Conference, Oct. 2000

“I revere the priesthood of Almighty God. I have witnessed its power. I have seen its strength. I have marveled at the miracles it has wrought.”

Thomas S. Monson, Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 107.

“The goal of gospel teaching . . . is not to ‘pour information’ into the minds of class members . . . The aim is to inspire the individual to think about, feel about, and then do something about living gospel principles.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

All Are Alike Unto God

http://whatwomenknow.org/all_are_alike/

Fair Mormon *To Do the Business of the Church*

<http://www.fairmormon.org/perspectives/fair-conferences/2012-fair-conference/2012-to-do-the-business-of-the-church-a-cooperative-paradigm>

LDS WAVE *I Feel Unequal When*

<http://www.ldswave.org/?p=402>

LDS WAVE *Words of Wisdom*

<http://www.ldswave.org/?p=808>

Ordain Women

<http://ordainwomen.org/>

Ordain Women *Frequently Asked Questions*

<http://ordainwomen.org/faq/>

Ordain Women *FAQs for the Oct. 5 Priesthood Session Action*

<http://ordainwomen.org/faqs-for-the-oct-5-priesthood-session-action/>

The Exponent *Empowering Women on the Ward Level*

<http://www.the-exponent.com/empowering-women-on-the-ward-level/>

The Exponent *Mormon Male Privilege and How to Make Apparent Gender Disparity in the Church*

<http://www.the-exponent.com/mormon-male-privilege-and-how-to-make-apparent-gender-disparity-in-the-church/>