



ORDAIN WOMEN



## 34 Quotes About Women and the Priesthood from Church History

1. Joseph Smith's private journal reads that he "gave a lecture on the pries[t]hood shewing [sic] how the Sisters would come in possession of the privileges & blessings & gifts of the priesthood. & that the signs should follow them. such as healing the sick casting out devils" -*Book of the Law of the Lord*, 8 April 1842, in *Joseph Smith Papers* ([josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org), original document [here](#))
2. "He [Joseph Smith] propos'd that the Sisters elect a presiding officer to preside over them, and let that presiding officer choose two Counsellors to assist in the duties of her Office— that he would ordain them to preside over the Society— and let them preside just as the Presidency, preside over the church... If any Officers are wanted to carry out the designs of the Institution, let them be appointed and set apart, as Deacons, Teachers &c." -*March 17, 1842, Eliza R Snow, Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes*, in *Joseph Smith Papers* (original document [here](#))



3. "He [Joseph Smith] ask'd the Society if they could not see by this sweeping stroke, that wherein they are ordained, it is the privilege of those set apart to administer in that authority which is confer'd on them— and if the sisters should have faith to heal the sick, let all hold their tongues, and let every thing roll on...Respecting the female laying on hands, he further remark'd, there could be no devils in it if God gave his sanction by healing— that there could be no more sin in any female laying hands on the sick than in wetting the face with water. He reprov'd those that were dispos'd to find fault with the management of concerns—saying if he undertook to lead the church he would lead it right—that the calculates to organize the church in proper order." -*Eliza R. Snow, Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes*, in *Joseph Smith Papers* (original document [here](#))
4. Joseph Smith said to the Relief Society, "the Society should move according to the ancient Priesthood" and that he was "going to make of this Society a kingdom of priests as in Enoch's day— as in Paul's day." -*30 March 1842, Eliza R. Snow, Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes*, in *Joseph Smith Papers* (original document [here](#))

5. Joseph also said to the Relief Society, “the keys of the kingdom are about to be given to them that they may be able to detect everything false, as well as to the Elders...**I now turn the key to you in the name of God**, and this society shall rejoice, and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time ...” -28 April 1842, *Eliza R. Snow, Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book, in Joseph Smith Papers (original document [here](#))*
6. Joseph Smith said, “**Who are better qualified to administer than our faithful and zealous sisters** whose hearts are full of faith, tenderness, sympathy, and compassion? No one.” *Relief Society Minutes, 28 April 1842, in Joseph Smith Papers (original document [here](#))*
7. The fifth time the Nauvoo Relief Society convened in 1842, Sarah Cleveland invited the sisters to speak freely. Sister Durfee “**bore testimony to the great blessing she received when administered to after the last meeting by Emma Smith and [her] Counselors Cleveland and Whitney, she said she never realized more benefit through an administration.**” She added that she had been healed and “thought the sisters had more faith than the brethren.” -*Relief Society Minutes, 18 Apr. 1842, in Joseph Smith Papers (original document [here](#))*



8. [D&C 25: 6-7](#) “And thou **[Emma Smith]** shalt be ordained under his **[Joseph’s]** hand to expound scriptures, and to exhort the church, according as it shall be given thee by my Spirit.”
9. Joseph Smith’s First Counselor Sidney Rigdon said, “**Emma was the one to whom the female priesthood was first given.**” -June 1868, communication to Stephen Post, *LDS Archives*
10. The prophet Joseph’s secretary noted that on February 3, 1844 Jane Bicknell Young was endowed and received “**into the Quorum of the Priesthood.**” -*Diary of William H. Clayton, LDS Archives*



11. Bathsheba W. Smith, 4th General Relief Society President and wife of First Presidency member, wrote, "I never like to hear a sermon without hearing something of the Prophet **[[Joseph Smith]]**, for he gave us everything, **every order of the priesthood**. He said he had given the sisters instructions that they could administer to the sick and **he wanted to make us, as the women were in Paul's day, 'A kingdom of priestesses.'**" ~9 June 1905, *Pioneer Stake Relief Society minutes, LDS archives*
12. Elizabeth Ann Whitney (counselor to Emma Smith in the Relief Society Presidency, wife of the Church's first bishop) received her authority to bless through ordination. "**I was ... ordained and set apart under the hand of Joseph Smith the Prophet** to administer to the sick and comfort the sorrowful. **Several other sisters were also ordained and set apart to administer in these holy ordinances.**" *Elizabeth Whitney Autobiography, published in the [Woman's Exponent, 15 Nov. 1878, p. 91.](#)*



13. On September 17, 1843 Patriarch (and Joseph Smith's brother) Hyrum Smith blessed Olive G. Frost, one of Joseph Smith's plural wives, that "you shall be blessed with a knowledge of the mysteries of God as well as **the fullness of the Priesthood.**" ~*Hyrum Smith patriarchal blessing to Olive G. Frost, LDS Archives.*
14. Hyrum also blessed Leonora Cannon Taylor: "**You shall be blesst **[[sic]]** with your portion of the Priesthood which belongeth to you**, that you may be set apart for your Anointing and your induement **[[endowment]]**." ~*Hyrum Smith patriarchal blessing to Leonora Taylor, 28 July 1843, LDS Archives*
15. Joseph and Hyrum's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, was told by their uncle, John Smith, on Nov 29, 1844: "**Thou art...a lawful heir to the priesthood** which was sealed upon the head of Ephriam." ~*Patriarchal Blessing of Lucy M. Smith*



16. John Smith also gave Emily Partridge Smith Young, a plural wife to both Joseph and Brigham, the following Patriarchal Blessing: “Sister Emily, by virtue of the holy priesthood, I place my hands upon thy head in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and seal upon thee a patriarchal or father’s blessing, **for thou art...a lawful heir to the priesthood, which shall be conferred upon thee in fullness in due time.**” *26 June 1849, Later Patriarchal Blessings, p. 46-47.*
17. Augusta Cobb Young (3rd wife of Brigham Young) wrote a letter in February 1848 to her friend in Boston, giving her a blessing, which she sealed upon her friend’s head “**by the power of the Holy Priesthood vested in me.**” Then two months later, she wrote a petition to Brigham Young to be sealed to Joseph Smith posthumously, making the request again by “**the power of the Holy Priesthood vested in me.**” That document was notarized by Willard Richards and Heber C. Kimball as members of the First Presidency. Augusta clearly believed that she held the LDS priesthood and two members of the First Presidency who were also within Joseph Smith’s inner circle in Nauvoo did not disagree with her. The prophet granted her wish. [\*Journal of Mormon History, Utah State U., Spring 2012 issue\*](#)
18. Joseph Young (a patriarch and senior president of the Council of Seventy) blessed his niece, Brigham Young’s daughter: “These blessings are yours, the blessings and **power according to the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood you received** in your Endowments, and you shall have them.” *Patriarchal blessing by Joseph Young, 28 May 1878, in [Zina Young Card Papers, Archives, Lee Library, BYU.](#)*



19. Zina D. H. Young, plural wife of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young said, “It is the privilege of the sisters, who are faithful in the discharge of their duties, and have received their endowments and blessings in the house of the Lord, to administer to their sisters, and to the little ones, in time of sickness, in meekness and humility, ever being careful to ask in the name of Jesus, and to give God the glory.” [\*Woman’s Exponent 17 \(15 Aug. 1889\): 172.\*](#)

20. Zina Young also recorded in her journal that on Joseph Smith's birthday in 1881, she washed and anointed one woman "for her health" and administered to another "for her hearing." She remembered the Prophet's birthday and reminisced about the days in Nauvoo when she was one of his plural wives: **"I have practiced much with My Sister Presendia Kimball while in Nauvoo & ever since before Joseph Smith's death. He blest Sisters to bless the sick."** -*Zina Diantha Huntington Smith Young Diary, Vol. 13, Aug.-Dec. 1881, LDS archives.*
21. Patty Sessions, plural wife of Joseph Smith, wrote **"I felt as though I must lay hands on her.** I never felt so before without being called on to do it. She said, 'Well, do it.' **I knew I had been ordained** to lay hands on the sick and set apart to do that. She had been washed clean and I anointed her, gave her some oil to take, and then laid hands on her. I told her she would get well if she would believe and not doubt it." -*Susan Sessions Rugh, "Patty Bartlett Sessions: More Than a Midwife"*
22. At an April 1844 Nauvoo General Conference, Brigham Young declared, "I want a wife that can take care of my childre[n] when I am away — who can pray — **lay on hands anoint with oil & baffle the enemy.**" -[\*Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet, Turner, p. 159.\*](#)



23. Brigham Young, in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, on 14 November 1869, addressed mothers specifically: "Why do you not live so as to rebuke disease? **It is your privilege to do so without sending for the Elders...**It is the privilege of a mother to have faith and to administer to her child; this she can do herself, as well as sending for the Elders to have the benefit of their faith." -[\*Journal of Discourses, 13: 155\*](#)
24. Brigham Young wrote that **Thirza Cahoon, Lois Cutler, and Phebe Woodworth** were **"taken into the order of the priesthood."** -*Brigham Young Diary, 29 October 1843, Weber State Archives*

25. Apostle Heber C. Kimball's diary noted that Brigham Young "appointed W. W. Phelps and P. P. Pratt to instruct the brethren *and sisters* ... more fully into the nature and importance of the blessings and powers of the Holy Priesthood which *they* had received ..." *Heber C. Kimball diary (written by William Clayton), 14 Dec. 1845, in Smith, An Intimate Chronicle, p. 214-15*
26. Heber C. Kimball also declared, "Was every woman qualified to raise that child [Jesus]? No. You will find that **Mary was of the Royal Priesthood**, which is after the order of God..." [\*Journal of Discourses 6:125\*](#) (that priesthood order is called Melchizedek in D&C 107, which Mary held possibly like her Hebrew ancestors Miriam, Debrah, Hulda, and Anna who prophesied in Luke Chapter 2).



27. President Wilford Woodruff asserted that a woman could be a revelator for the entire church. In April 1894's general conference he said: "**That hymn [O My Father] is a revelation...given unto us by a woman—Sister Eliza R. Snow. There are a great many sisters who have the spirit of revelation. There is no reason why they should not be inspired as well as men.**" *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff* (Her revelation to the church is one of the earliest statements in Mormon theology on a Heavenly Mother.)
28. A young Phoebe Woodruff served a mission with her husband, Wilford (future 4th prophet), in 1848. In the ocean outside Cambridge, MA, she led her new convert, her 76 year old father Ezra, in and out of the baptismal waters on March 22, 1849. Wilford wrote, "**Mrs Woodruff accompanied her Father to the water And Back again.**" [\*Wilford Woodruff Journals, LDS Archives\*](#)
29. Regarding all missionaries, [see D&C 42:11](#): "Again I say unto you, that it shall not be given to *anyone* to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, **except he [or she] be ordained** by someone who has authority, and it is known to the church that he [or she] has authority and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church." (gender inclusive [she] added).



30. President Heber J. Grant wrote to a mission president in 1928 that there was **"no rule in the Church" that only priesthood bearers could carry the sacrament to the congregation after it was blessed.**  
*28 June 1928, Heber J Grant Letterbook, LDS Archives*



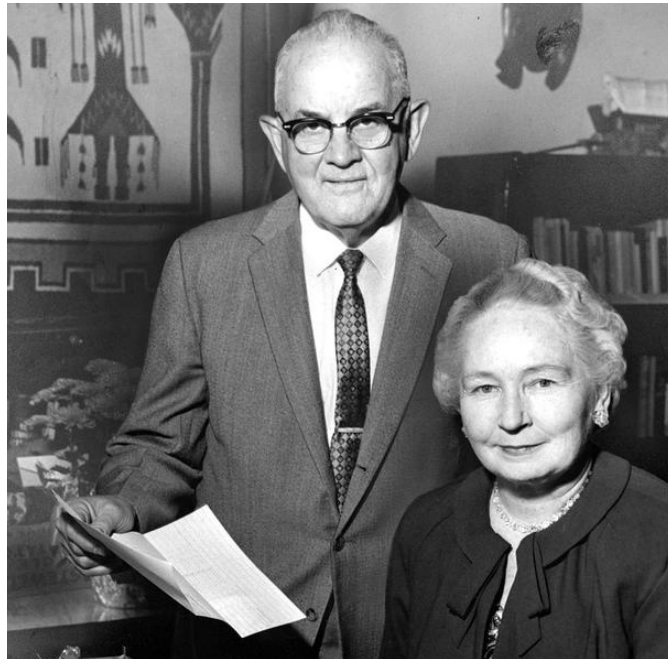
31. This transcript was preserved by [Oakley Idaho Second Ward Relief Society Minute Book](#) in 1909. It is one of many, and its existence signals the practice of **blessing and anointing ordinances in preparation for childbirth tied to the Relief Society**:

**"We anoint** your back, your spinal column that you might be strong and healthy [that] no disease fasten upon it, no accident befall you, Your kidneys that they might be active and healthy and perform their proper functions, your bladder that it might be strong and protected from accident, your sides that your liver, your lungs, and spleen that they might be strong and perform their proper functions, ... your breasts that your milk may come freely, and you need not be afflicted with sore nipples as many are, your heart that it might be comforted.

[your baby that it may be] perfect in every joint and limb and muscle, that it might be beautiful to look upon ... [and] happy" and that "when [its] full time shall have come that the child shall present right for birth and that the afterbirth shall come at its proper time ... you need not flow to excess ... **We anoint** ... your thighs that they might be healthy and strong that you might be exempt from cramps and from the bursting of veins ... That you might stand upon the earth [and] go in and out of the Temples of God.

**We unitedly lay our hands upon you to seal this washing and anointing where with you have been washed and anointed for your safe delivery, for the salvation of you and your child,** and we ask God to let his special blessings rest upon you, that you might sleep well at night, that your dreams might be pleasant and that the good spirit might guard and protect you from every evil influence spirit and power that you may go your full time and that every blessing that we have asked God to confer upon you and your offspring may be literally fulfilled that all fear and dread may be taken from you and that you might trust in God. **All these blessings, we unitedly seal upon you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."**

32. "Sister Martha Meecham said she had done as much washing and anointing as anyone in this Stake. Related an experience of a blessing she had given while she was in Salt Lake. Said she wanted to spend the rest of her life in doing good to others and giving blessings and confirming them. Related of experiences where all had blessed and anointed people. **Said she had written to Pres. J. F. Smith on this sub[ject] and he had told her to keep on and bless and comfort as she had done in the past.**" -Relief Society Minutes of the Logan Utah Cache Stake, 1910. *LDS Church History Library, Call Number: LR 1280 14, Logan Utah Cache Stake, Relief Society minutes and records, 1868-1973, pp. 438-40* (view original [here](#))



33. In 1979 President Spencer W. Kimball was recovering from brain surgery. Bruce R. McConkie and Marion D. Hanks arrived. Hanks anointed the prophet's head. The apostle invited the prophet's son, and also his wife, Camilla, to place her hands on her husband's head. **"That was unusual," his son Edward Kimball later wrote. "It seemed right to me, but I would not have felt free to suggest it on my own because of an ingrained sense that the ordinance is a priesthood ordinance."** -*Edward Kimball Diary*
34. **"Achieving the fulness of the priesthood of the Son of God is the great goal of all faithful Latter-day Saints,** because it is the power of God unto salvation and eternal lives." [\*Encyclopedia of Mormonism\*](#)

