

precausation whether as “fate,” “the stars,” “blind chance,” or even the PREDESTINATION of man by God. Fate in these forms implies a pre-caused outcome of one’s life. Instead, man is seen as having innate autonomies and capacities—the gift of AGENCY—that the divine will guarantees all men: “I the Lord God make you free, therefore ye are free indeed: and the law also maketh you free” (D&C 98:8; cf. 2 Ne. 2:25–27; Alma 12:31; Moses 4:3). People are free to choose obedience or disobedience, good or evil, and most other aspects of their lives, and they are accountable for their choices. The belief that all is fated, stifles, discourages, and hinders the progress and growth possible for the children of God. Fate is considered a negative term in the gospel. Even one’s own momentous decisions influence one’s so-called fate or destiny only as long as the decisions are maintained. The GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST opens to all mankind the opportunity to rise above chance fate in this life and choose eternal life with God.

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## FATHERHOOD

LDS fathers have primary responsibility for providing spiritual and physical support for all other family members (D&C 68:25, 28; 75:28). Giving Christlike service as a husband and father is the most important work a man can perform during mortality. Far more than mere procreation, fatherhood entails the lifelong care of children and loving support of their mother. Elder Theodore Tuttle wrote that for husbands to be effective fathers they should strive to learn and express those attributes they understand Heavenly Father to possess (pp. 66–68).

Latter-day Saints view parenthood as the highest and most sacred calling from God to his children on earth. Mothers and fathers are taught to labor together in faith and love to bring children into the world, to care for them, and to teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ so that they may receive eternal life, thus as parents following the example of their Father and Mother in Heaven (D&C 93:40). Through sacred covenants with God and with each other, men and women establish in this

life families that have the potential to endure forever.

Fatherhood is best represented in men who unselfishly cherish and befriend their wives and promote their children’s happiness and righteousness. This includes nurturing and expressing love, establishing obedience of their children through firmness and warmth, and teaching the gospel in home and Church settings. Fathers are also encouraged to lead by example (Benson, 1985).

Boys and men are taught the characteristics that exemplify loving and responsible fathers. As part of the Primary organization curricula, songs and lessons teach children to admire their fathers and to associate manhood and fatherhood with the characteristics of Christ. As members of a PRIESTHOOD QUORUM, young men are taught self-reliance, self-mastery, achievement, honor and respect for women, and chastity. Youth activities, Church sermons, and family programs also emphasize the importance of service to and sacrifice for others as part of fatherhood. Adult men are exposed to continuing emphasis on fatherhood. Formal instruction in Melchizedek Priesthood quorums is often aimed at motivating and inspiring men to esteem women as fellow children of the Father of all human beings, to observe strict marital fidelity, to give appropriate emphasis to the needs of children, and to learn skills that promote happy and successful lives for all family members.

Men in leadership positions are admonished not to neglect their family duties. When necessary,



LDS fathers lead, teach, play with, and counsel their children as part of their indispensable participation in family life. For Latter-day Saints, no calling or role surpasses a father’s personal obligation to guide his children in righteousness. Courtesy Floyd Holdman (Tokyo, 1986).

men may be released from demanding Church positions in order to give appropriate time to their families. Fathers are taught to spend time with their families; to bring the family together in frequent prayer, scripture study, and family meetings; and to teach children to keep God's commandments, to work, and to respect others (Mosiah 4:14–15; 3 Ne. 18:21).

[See also Father's Blessings; Lifestyle; Marriage; Men, Roles of; Motherhood.]

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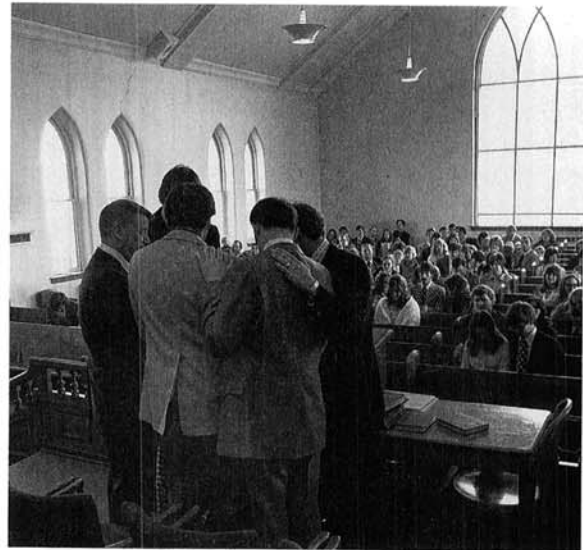
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## FATHERS' BLESSINGS

Fathers' blessings are given by the power of the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD following the pattern of the ancient PATRIARCHS, such as ADAM, NOAH, ABRAHAM, Isaac, Jacob, LEHI, MOSIAH, ALMA<sub>2</sub>, and MORMON. All gave blessings to their children. Adam's final blessing upon several of his descendants is described in Doctrine and Covenants 107:53–57. So significant was the ORDINANCE on that occasion that "the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam" (*TPJS*, p. 38).

For the earthly blessing to be honored in heaven, it is necessary that a father has been baptized, has received the HOLY GHOST, and bears the Melchizedek Priesthood. Through these ordinances and COVENANTS, the father may claim the powers of heaven to guide his thoughts and ratify his words. To give such a blessing, the father places his hands upon the head of his child, and assures the child by word and spirit that the blessing, spoken by a loving parent, comes with divine approval and INSPIRATION.

The father may give blessings when requested by his wife or children or when he feels their need.



A father, assisted by other men who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood, gives his infant child a name and a father's blessing during a sacrament meeting (c. 1975; see D&C 20:70). Fathers may also bless their children at other times of need. Courtesy Doug Martin.

He does not force a blessing on anyone, for that would conflict both with the law of AGENCY and the spirit of LOVE. There is no ideal frequency for such blessings, only as the needs of the person and the whisperings of the Spirit suggest. A father will find performing this sacred ordinance easier if his relationships with his children are gentle and kind. If there is a conflict between father and child, it may be necessary to reconcile it before attempting the blessing.

A father's blessing is both an ordinance authorized by God and an action that draws father and child together even as it reassures a mother, who sees her husband spiritually minister to their child. It is a symbolic and official godlike act of pure love.

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## FAYETTE, NEW YORK

The township of Fayette, New York, is located in Seneca County between Seneca and Cayuga lakes.