ETERNAL MARRIAGE; TEMPLES; TEMPLE WORSHIP AND ACTIVITY.

This order of instruction and covenant making culminates in the celestial room, which represents the highest degree of heaven, a return to the presence of God, a place of exquisite beauty and serenity, where one may feel and meditate “in the beauty of holiness” (Ps. 29:2). Communal sensitivity in the presence of like-minded and like-experienced loved ones enhances deep fellowship. The temple is “a house of glory” and “a place of thanksgiving for all saints” (D&C 88:119; 97:13).

SEALING OF FAMILIES. Only after patrons make these unconditional covenants with and through Jesus Christ may they receive “the most glorious ordinances of the temple,” the covenants of marriage and family sealing (Widtsoe, 1937, p. 128). Marriage and sealing covenants are performed in temple sealing rooms convenient to the celestial room. Officers and close family and friends often attend the couple. Kneeling opposite each other at the altar, the bride and groom are placed under mutual covenants to each other, and are married through the sealing power of Jesus Christ; their children will thus be born in the covenant, and the family kingdom will become a nucleus of heaven. If the couple has been previously married under secular authority and now has children, the husband and wife are sealed in the temple under the new and everlasting covenant and their children are then brought to the altar and are sealed to them. All subsequent children born to this family are born in the covenant. By apostolic authority, the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are explicitly invoked upon all marriages and sealings. It is envisioned that eventually further sealings will link all the couple’s progenitors and all of their descendants in an unbroken chain (see SEALING: TEMPLE SEALINGS). Thus, divine parenthood is imaged on earth. The saintly life is not in renunciation but in glorification of the family. The quest for happiness and completeness within the marital state is transformed from the banal and temporary toward the divine and eternal.

SEALING OF ADOPTED CHILDREN. If a couple elects to adopt children, those children are brought to the temple for a ceremony of sealing to their adoptive parents just as children born to them may be sealed.

PROXY ORDINANCES. All temple ordinances, beginning with baptism, may be performed by proxy for persons who died not having the opportunity to receive them for themselves (see BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD; SALVATION FOR THE DEAD).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALLEN CLAIRE ROZSA

TEMPLE PRESIDENT AND MATRON

Temple presidents and their wives, who serve as matrons, are appointed to specific LDS temples by the FIRST PRESIDENCY of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, usually for three years. Their principal responsibilities are to set the spiritual tone of the temple, to supervise the performance of sacred ceremonies and ordinances therein, and to oversee the physical facility. Although instructions and ORDINANCES are the same in all LDS temples, the size of the temple and the number of patrons using it alter the procedures from temple to temple.

On a typical day in a fully operating temple, the president meets with the male supervisors and ordinance workers and the matron meets with the female supervisors and ordinance workers in prayer meeting before beginning each of the several daily shifts. They may also greet patrons, give preparatory instructions and guidance to those coming for the first time, and coordinate the performance of the ordinances. The president and matron may also answer personal inquiries of patrons and resolve procedural questions, by phone or correspondence, from BISHOPS, STAKE PRESIDENTS, RELIEF SOCIETY presidents, and other Church and community leaders within the temple district. Time is also spent consulting with counselors in the temple presidency, assistants to the president, and supervisors. In addition, the president and matron meet regularly with the temple
executive council to resolve matters pertaining to the functioning of the temple.

The work in the temple is conducted prayerfully as befits the “House of the Lord.” The phrase “Holiness to the Lord” appears prominently on the outside of each temple and symbolizes the spirit of temple worship (cf. Psalm 93:5). Although the temple ordinances are performed repetitiously, participating in them can be continuously revelatory and inspiring because of their rich symbolism and multiple applications. The temple president and matron are responsible for enhancing this spirit that all may “worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” (Psalm 29).

DAVID H. YARN, JR.
MARILYN S. YARN

TEMPLE RECOMMEND

Temples have always been revered and reserved as sacred ground. Anciently, the prophet EZEKIEL declared, “Thus saith the Lord GOD: No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary” (Ezek. 44:9). The Prophet Joseph SMITH prayed that “[the temple] may be sanctified and consecrated to be holy, and that thy holy presence may be continually in this house” (D&C 109:12), “and that no unclean thing shall be permitted to come into thy house to pollute it” (D&C 109:20).

After construction and before a TEMPLE of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been dedicated to the Lord, an open house is held and the general public is invited to enter and view the rooms. But for participation in a TEMPLE DEDICATION and for all ORDINANCES performed in the temple thereafter, only members of the Church who have a current identification card, called a temple recommend, may enter.

Temple recommends are given to members of the Church who have completed the preliminary steps of FAITH, REPENTANCE, BAPTISM, and CONFIRMATION. Adult males must also have been ordained to the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD. Temple recommends are usually issued by a BISHOP and countersigned by a member of the STAKE PRESIDENCY in interviews conducted in private. The bishop, who is responsible as a “judge in Israel” (D&C 107:72, 74, 76), conducts the initial interview. He seeks to discern personal worthiness and standards of Christlike living and counsels appropriately with those whose lives are in need of any change or repentance. It is considered a serious matter to become prepared to receive the COVENANTS, ordinances, and BLESSINGS of the temple. Questions are asked to ascertain one’s faith in God the Eternal Father, in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost; and inquiry is made regarding the person’s TESTIMONY of the restored gospel and loyalty to the teachings and leaders of the Church. Worthiness requirements include being honest, keeping the COMMANDMENTS, such as CHASTITY—sexual continence before marriage and fidelity within marriage—obeying the laws of TITHING and the WORD OF WISDOM, fulfilling family responsibilities and avoiding affiliation with dissident groups. The FIRST PRESIDENCY often emphasizes that it is a solemn responsibility for a

CERTIFICATE.

[Signature]
(Seal)

Approval from two priesthood leaders, including one’s bishop, is required in order to enter the temple for most purposes. This 1879 “temple recommend” certified Martha Laughton to be a Church member in good standing and worthy to go to the temple to receive her endowment.