

## **Meditations on the Temple**

This past week my wife and I were called as temple ordinance workers, and yesterday was our first day to work in the temple. These events have prompted a flood of thoughts and feelings that I need to try to capture for myself. I put them here in the hope that they may be useful to you.

Of course, when we got a call saying that a member of the temple presidency wanted to speak with us I immediately thought of the possibility of being called as a temple worker. The thought was exciting, and made me reflect on family and friends that have worked in the temple and some of the things they have expressed to me. It took several days before we could arrange an appointment, and that time held the normal apprehension one feels while waiting for such a meeting.

When the presidency member extended the calling I was very excited. I truly felt that this was something sacred, and I felt uplifted. He set us apart on the spot, which I hadn't expected. For both of us he expressed the blessings that would come to us in our lives, and especially in our family. The latter is a blessing we sorely need, and to which we look forward with great anticipation. He counseled me to study the scriptures to understand what they teach about the temple (counsel I have not yet followed. Hmm). In my wife's blessing he discussed the experience she would have as she performed sacred temple ordinances. That really caught my attention – it had never occurred to me that in the temple she would be able to perform priesthood ordinances – something she can do nowhere else.

Finally yesterday arrives, when we could start on our assignments. We showed up at the temple rather early in the morning, and went through a few whirlwind hours of orientation. The first thing I realized was that there is a lot that goes on “behind the scenes” at the temple in order to make the experience positive and uplifting for the patrons there. The realization started to dawn on me that I have always appreciated the efforts on the part of the temple workers to make my experience good, now it will be my turn to perform that service for others.

I then went to start memorizing some of the ordinances so that I could officiate in them. That is something that comes relatively easily to me, thanks to another longstanding blessing I have enjoyed. Very quickly I found myself standing in a holy place to serve other members. Initially

I was concerned about doing everything right. However, I quickly realized that concerns about myself were far less important than making sure that the patron I was serving was receiving the full spirit and blessing of the ordinance. As my focus shifted away from me I found a great joy in helping others. I was impressed with the depth of that feeling.

Interestingly, the whole experience crescendoed after we left the temple. Then it was that I realized how deeply my heart has been changed. I have attended the temple and participated in those same ordinances hundreds of times, but yesterday I gained an appreciation of them I have never felt before. It has little to do with deep doctrinal insights or understanding. It has a lot to do with how I feel about the temple. I now feel much more a part of the temple, and I experience a deep longing to be there again. My whole outlook on the world has shifted, and I now feel much more strongly my obligation to serve my fellowmen. I am changed, I am softened, I am made more whole. I am much more aware of when I behave unworthily, because it removes me from the spiritual place I want to be. I am much more aware of my potential to do good.

I now have great expectations for what the coming years' service will bring. But the blessings are already making themselves manifest inside of me. I feel a huge debt of gratitude to my Heavenly Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ for providing me with the temple and the opportunity to serve therein. I have tasted a tiny portion of what the Celestial Kingdom will be like, and I hunger for more.