

The Family: A Proclamation to the World

The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints We, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained

of God and that the **family** is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children. All human beings-male and female-are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a **divine nature and destiny**. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual pre-mortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

In the pre-mortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life. The divine plan of **happiness** enables **family** relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally. The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife. We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in

God's eternal plan. Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to **love** and **care** for each other and for their children. "Children are an heritage of the Lord." Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in **love** and **righteousness**, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and **serve** one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives-mothers and fathers will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations. The **family** is ordained of God.

Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. **Happiness** in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of **faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion,**

work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, **fathers** are to preside over their families in **love** and **righteousness** and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. **Mothers** are primarily responsible for the **nurture** of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, **fathers** and **mothers** are obligated to help one another as **equal** partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend **support** when needed. We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the **family** will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets. We call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and **strengthen** the **family** as the fundamental unit of society.