

Organize Yourselves: Using D&C 88 to Start Your Year Off Right

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Given in late 1832 and early 1833, the revelations comprising Doctrine and Covenants 88 were declared to be a message of peace to the Saints. Included was a commandment to build a temple in Kirtland; the verse is well-known among Latter-day Saints.

Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God;

As a new year approaches, it common for people to be reflective and create goals to change. Making meaningful goals helps us become more like Jesus Christ. But how do we create goals to truly experience the change of heart that will help us change our lives? We've taken this verse and broken it down into some possible goals for a more fulfilling and Christ-like journey through another twelve months.

A House of Prayer:

Prayer, rather than rote recitation, is about a relationship with Christ and Heavenly Father. When seeking to improve your prayers it can be easy to focus on just getting them done. This may be a great first step, but putting the emphasis on the quality of your prayers will help us become excited about communicating with God.

Here are some goals you can set to improve your prayers in 2016:

- Set a specific time to prayer when you're alert and unhurried. This could be while driving in the car, a good hour before bed, or on your lunch break.
- Pray during the small moments. You could be grateful when you get your grades back or upset the traffic is taking so long. Talk with God during the small moments and you'll notice yourself turning to Him more often.
- If family prayer is daunting, try eliminating the clutter and distraction. Pick a time when everyone is there, a space that is clean and quiet, and have everyone put their electronics in one place until the prayer is over. If family members are far or travelling, use video conferencing or the telephone to include them.
- Start a prayer journal. Before you prayer, write down what you are grateful for and what you are needing and feeling. After the prayer is over, write down the feelings you have and give God time to answer.

The Bible Dictionary says prayer becomes natural and instinctive when we understand our who we are to God and who God is to us. By making prayer about building a relationship, making sure our prayers happen will almost take care of itself.

A House of Fasting:

Fasting can be hard. Really, really hard. Despite our best efforts we can spend fast Sundays grumpy and

woozy. However, the Lord tells us that fasting is rejoicing. So how do we improve? Try a couple of these:

- We all know fasting should have a purpose and that is supposedly what makes it easier. However, we can often pick our purpose on Saturday night when we're bemoaning our already growling stomachs. Instead, start on Friday night. Start pondering what your fast should be about and why it is important to you. You'll be more prepared to commit to your fast if it is something you've been earnestly thinking about.
- Plan action items that relate to what you're fasting about. For example, if you know someone who is sick, take time as you're fasting to send them a note or serve them in some manner. If you're looking for a job, use the time to study the Church's employment resources. Make fasting about working together with the Lord.

Fasting may not always go by as fast as we'd like it to, but by using your time wisely you can learn how to find the joy in it.

A House of Faith:

Faith and agency are tightly linked together. Faith requires us to take the first step in the dark and to make choices we may not always understand or feel totally comfortable with. If you feel like the flame of your faith may be sputtering out, here are some ideas about how to reignite the spark:

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland invited everyone struggling with their testimony to lean on his. Make a goal to study the testimonies of others on a regular basis. This could be the living prophets and apostles or it could be talking with trusted friends and Church leaders.
- Faith is action-oriented! Focus on what you can do and lead with what you know. It isn't enough just to dispel darkness; we need to add light. The more light you add into your life, the more strength you'll have to combat the darkness.
- Set goals, period. Set goals as an individual and as families. Making plans, making choices, and moving forward is faith in action. Here's [a great article about how to harness the planning tools of missionaries](#) to ensure success.

Just remember to never give up and keep moving forward. Faith isn't just praying we won't fall down; it's getting up even if we fall.

A House of Learning:

Elder Joseph Anderson once gave a talk in General Conference and the title of his address is telling: Eternal Joy is Eternal Growth. Growing in truth can bring us joy and ultimately lead us to eternal life! However, it can be easy to use our free time to binge-watch our favorite tv shows and lose hours more than we planned. Whether it is spiritual or secular learning, Heavenly Father wants us to open our minds and hearts to all sorts of subjects. Here are a few ways you can embrace a more truth-filled year:

- When it comes to studying the scriptures and the words of living prophets, focus on what you want to learn. Write down your questions and study specific topics instead of trying to read your way through.
- Read your Church lessons ahead of time. If you find yourself with questions after studying and reading through, consider asking the question to your other classmates and teacher. Church classes aren't just for commenting.
- Pick a way to learn a new subject or skill. You could watch documentaries, use Pinterest, make goals to read books, take classes, or join a group.

Above all learn to love learning, no matter the subject matter.

A House of Glory:

In the Pearl of Great Price, we learn that God's glory comes from the immortality and eternal life of man. He wants us to be confident and understand our divine nature. Doing so helps us achieve our goals and find purpose in this life. Use some of these thoughts to help you and your family understand how glorious you are this upcoming year.

- Make a point of eliminating self-deprecating thoughts. Be your own cheerleader. Be honest about what you need to work on, but make sure to be on your own side.
- Regularly read and study your patriarchal blessing.
- Create a self-care goal; whether it is eating healthier, exercising more, or getting dressed up simply because you enjoy it.
- Seek to grow glory in others. Try to express your gratitude more frequently and give specific and sincere compliments.

It can be hard to find glory in others and in ourselves. As we strive to see things as God does, we will gain empathy, compassion, and strength.

A House of Order:

You may want to avoid cleaning until spring, but since the cold weather keeps you inside it doesn't hurt to spruce it up. You can invite the Spirit into your home or workplace by keeping it clean physically; once this is done, you can focus on keeping your relationships and goals in orders. Here are some ideas on how to create a house of order both physically and spiritually.

- Find a way to declutter. One good idea is to get rid of something for every new gift you got for Christmas. Create a schedule that works for you to maintain small messes rather than waiting for everything to pile up.
- Sit down together with your family and find a way to schedule your time more effectively, making sure to include family prayer, FHE, and other important tasks.
- Try to set aside a space for gospel study and prayer.

Everyone works differently. What may be orderly for you many not be orderly for someone else. Evaluate what a house of order means for you and your life and set small goals to achieve it.

A House of God:

As 2016 begins, it is easy to look back on the past year and desire to change. Ultimately, we can come closer to God as we put our lives and our year into His perspective. No matter the goals we make, we will go the farthest when we remember His goal for us, this year and always: that we come home to Him and that we become like He is.