

2005 Women's Conference Sharing Stations

Provident Living Interactive Corner Workshop Presentation

Food Storage: Put in the Joy by First Measuring the Blessings

Presenter: Joe Thompson Technical Manager Bishops' Storehouse Services

Two young children were overheard talking. The older of the two gave his friend this word of caution, "Never say 'A'. As soon as you do, they are going to want you to say, 'B'." How many Church members do you know who fear food storage in the same way? When it comes to "year's supply," their motto is, "Never say 'A'." They do not want to have even the first can of wheat on their shelves. Their fear is that as soon as they "touch" any part of food storage, they are going to be expected to carry the whole load, you know: baking whole wheat bread, drinking powdered milk and even making pinto bean fudge. Their feelings are that they do not have the time or energy and, "Why do we need to do it anyway?"

When no specific mention was made about food storage in General Conference a few weeks ago, I wondered how long it would be before we at Welfare Services received our first call asking if the Church still encourages food storage. We did not have to wait long. On Monday morning, following General Conference, I received a call from a member who was scheduled to make a presentation on year's supply to the ward that week and wanted to know if food storage was still important.

The first thing I would like to do is to assure you that the counsel to store food is still a very current topic.

In preparation for this presentation, I asked others this question, "What motivates us to live gospel principles?" Each person I asked this question to had a similar first response. "We live the principles of the gospel because of our love for the Savior." But I wanted to know more. I wanted to know how that love is translated into action in our daily lives.

Take missionary work, for example. As we see the blessings that come into the lives of those we introduce to the gospel, is not this a source of joy to us? Is not this joy a strength that helps us to share the gospel with others? In family history, is not our own testimony of the blessings that come to our ancestors, the motivator that causes us to seek them out and do their temple work? In giving humanitarian service, what blessings in the lives of others do we seek? Is it a motivator to us to contemplate that within just a few weeks or months of our donation, a small child in Indonesia, or Africa, or Florida will be brushing her teeth with a toothbrush that we personally purchased at Wal-Mart and put into hygiene kits assembled by our ward Relief Society?

As we apply this blessing-motivation reasoning to food storage, I would like to ask you to, for a moment, create a mental image. Envision the thought of you feeding a spoonful of oatmeal or rice, or a slice of bread to your own child, or grandchild, or to someone else you love. Now, put that scene into the future by 6 months, or maybe five years or ten years from now. If the nourishment

that you envision is given in a time of plenty, such as we have now, this may not be a very strong impression. However, if your image is of a time of significant personal or widespread scarcity, the blessing of that morsel of food would be a very powerful impression.

Now let me bring us back to why we are here today. The theme of this presentation is Food Storage Put in the joy by first measuring the blessings. When planning our food storage, perhaps the first question to consider is not, “What will I buy?” “Where will I store it?” or even “How much will it cost”. Perhaps the first question should be, “Whom will this food bless?”

President Monson, in an April 1993 General Conference address related the experience of Joseph Millett, an early member of the Church who found the joy that comes from using our personal storehouse to bless lives. Brother Millett made the following entry in his journal:

“One of my children came in, said that Brother Newton Hall’s folks were out of bread. Had none that day. I put ... our flour in sack to send up to Brother Hall’s. Just then Brother Hall came in. Says I, ‘Brother Hall, how are you [fixed] for flour.’ ‘Brother Millett, we have none.’ ‘Well, Brother Hall, there is some in that sack. I have divided [it] and was going to send it to you. Your children told mine that you were out.’ Brother Hall began to cry. Said he had tried others. Could not get any. Went to the cedars and prayed to the Lord and the Lord told him to go to Joseph Millett. ‘Well, Brother Hall, you needn’t bring this back if the Lord sent you for it. You don’t owe me for it.’ You can’t tell how good it made me feel to know that the Lord knew that there was such a person as Joseph Millett.”

The current edition of the Church News reports a similar story. The newly unveiled monument to Jane Manning James, an African American Mormon pioneer has the following inscription, “Shared her flour with Eliza Lyman who was near starving.”

I have a great testimony of the blessings that can come from following the prophetic counsel to store a year’s supply of food.

My parents always had a garden, and they even built a special insulated room in our house for food storage. My mother bottled many jars of fruit and vegetables. She also prepared many foods from scratch. We did not own a flour mill, but our stake 70’s quorum had one. Every week or so my mom would send one of us kids with a gallon pickle jar of wheat over to Brother Shepard’s. For a nickel, he would grind the wheat into fresh flour. We lived in Arizona. My father was a copper miner. Every few years the miners would go on strike and were off work for 6 to 8 months at a time. It was our food storage, our personal storehouse that carried our large family through those lean times.

If eating whole wheat bread and drinking powdered milk were indexes of orthodoxy in the Church, we would have ranked pretty high.

On the other hand, the approach that my wife and I have taken to home storage is different in a number of ways from that of my parents. To our married children, disposable diapers, wipies, and gummy bears are basic essentials.

The question of, “What do I need to do to be obedient to the counsel to have a year’s supply”, is one that we sometimes hear in calls that come into the headquarters’ offices of Welfare Services.

This question is best answered by referring to the handbook of instructions and to a letter entitled Home Storage and Financial Reserves, sent by the First Presidency to wards and branches on January 20, 2002. The letter reads as follows:

Dear Brethren:

Priesthood and Relief Society leaders should teach the importance of home storage and securing a financial reserve. These principles may be taught in ward councils or on a fifth Sunday in priesthood and Relief Society meetings.

Church members can begin their home storage by storing the basic foods that would be required to keep them alive if they did not have anything else to eat. Depending on where members live, those basics might include water, wheat or other grains, legumes, salt, honey or sugar, powdered milk, and cooking oil. When members have stored enough of these essentials to meet the needs of their family for one year, they may decide to add other items that they are accustomed to using day to day.

Some members do not have the money or space for such storage, and some are prohibited by law from storing a year's supply of food. These members should store as much as their circumstances allow. Families who do not have the resources to acquire a year's supply can begin their storage by obtaining supplies to last for a few months. Members should be prudent and not panic or go to extremes in this effort. Through careful planning, most Church members can, over time, establish both a financial reserve and a year's supply of essentials.

Sincerely yours,
The First Presidency

The reverse side of the letter contains suggested amounts of various food items that could be considered as basic storage. It noted that the list may vary according to location. The suggested amounts per adult for one year are:

Grains	400 pounds
Legumes	60 pounds
Powdered milk	16 pounds
Cooking oil	10 quarts
Sugar or honey	60 pounds
Salt	8 pounds
Water (2 weeks)	14 gallons

The food storage program is as simple or as involved as we personally want to make it. Any complexity beyond a basic one-year's supply of long-term food storage items is up to each of us to decide.

As members of the Church, we sometimes have conflicting feelings about food storage. We feel that it is a commandment for us to have a year's supply. At the same time, we also feel that it is a sin to waste food. If we do not properly care for our food storage, we can have waste. Once the guilt for wasting is greater than the pressure to store, we quit storing.

However, even the question of how to rotate our food storage can have a solution as simple as to give it away. If you do not rotate your food items by personal use, then while they are still within their optimum shelf life, give them to someone else who will use them. We all have extended family, neighbors, ward members or community groups that would love to receive these food donations. As we share items from our personal storehouse, we are blessed, the recipients are blessed, and we can renew our storage with newly purchased items.

For many, rotation of basic staple items through personal use has significant economic and health advantages. The new food pyramid information released this past week by the USDA recommends that we use “whole grains” for at least half of our grain servings.

The answer as to how to rotate our food storage is different for each of us.

In the October 2002 General Conference, President Hinckley urged us to have some food set aside within our homes. He counseled,

“We can begin ever so modestly. We can begin with a week’s food supply and gradually build it to a month, and then to three months. I am speaking now of food to cover basic needs. As all of you recognize, this counsel is not new. But I feel that so many feel that a long-term food supply is so far beyond their reach that they make no effort at all. Begin in a small way...and gradually build toward a reasonable objective.”

A young child’s fear of learning “A” or “B” or even the whole alphabet, is overcome by their desire for the blessing of being able to read. They gain a love for reading by being read to. When it comes to food storage, who are we “reading to”? Whose example are we patterning our own food storage after? Who is looking to us for the example they will follow?

In my own experience, I have found that people who are self reliant in food storage are generous. They are generous in supplying the needs of their own family. They are open to receive promptings of the spirit to share with others. They can feel the joy of having a personal storehouse by measuring the blessings that come from it.

For many years Welfare Services, under the direction of priesthood and Relief Society leaders, has been involved in developing methods to help members achieve the goal of obtaining a year’s supply of basic foods for long-term storage.

There are now about 100 Welfare Services home storage centers in the United States and Canada. These facilities provide members with the opportunity to package bulk dry food in #10 cans or foil pouches, either on site or with portable sealers that can be checked out for home use.

Home storage centers are managed and staffed by dedicated Church Service missionaries and volunteers. Many of these workers report that this assignment is one of the most enjoyable Church callings they have had. There is something very tangible and rewarding about seeing a family load up their car with cases to add to their personal storehouse.

For information on resources or training available for home storage efforts, contact your ward, stake, or regional welfare specialists.

Foil pouches have been a valuable addition to the dry pack options. These sturdy, one gallon capacity pouches, as well as pouch sealers and oxygen absorbers, are available at the Church distribution centers and on line at www.ldscatalog.com. They are available in international areas from the local distribution or service centers.

One of the easiest and least expensive ways to package dry food for storage is to put it into used PETE plastic bottles that have been cleaned and dried. These hard, clear plastic bottles are used for soda pop and juices. They can be identified by the letters PETE on the bottom of the bottle next to the triangular recycle emblem.

This type of container has good oxygen barrier qualities and can be used with oxygen absorbers to store bulk dry foods. The low oxygen content of the sealed containers protects the stored food from insect infestation and helps preserve product quality. These containers are well suited for products that are rotated on a regular basis, while still providing several years of storage capability.

If you were to set a goal to reuse all 2 liter and gallon PETE bottles that come into your home for either dry pack, or water storage, how quickly would you be able to build your years' supply of food?

The Provident Living Web site at www.lds.org is a valuable resource for practical information on both the why and how of food storage. Topics covered include:

- Instructions for long-term food storage in #10 cans, foil pouches, PETE plastic bottles, and plastic buckets.
- Water storage instructions
- A Food Storage Planning Guide
- Recipes for cooking with basic staple items.
- Copies of the dry-pack handouts in PDF format.

If you want "Word" format copies of the handouts, send an e-mail to: wel-drypack@ldschurch.org. Enter "Handouts" as the subject of the message.

Sisters, I encourage you to review Sister Bonnie D. Parkin's 2004 Spring Open House message. You can find it at www.lds.org/pa/display/0,17884,5392-1,00.html

Sister Parkin's council to Relief Society leaders was for them to know their priesthood leader's "vision of welfare". "Do you see that good information makes good inspiration?" she asked.

If you are a Relief Society leader and want to increase the level of self-reliance in your ward or stake, perhaps the first step would be for you to ask your priesthood leader to share with you his vision of food storage.

As part of the Provident Living Sharing Station, several food storage experts were invited to answer “one on one” questions. Each of these experts is very knowledgeable and passionate about home production and storage and has made significant contributions to this effort. You will find their information posted at booths 47-52.

Thomas Dickson is the owner of K-TEC. The mill design that Tom developed 30 years ago is now the standard of the home milling industry. Bishops’ Storehouse Services recently completed a test of a larger capacity K-TEC mill that produced over 26,000 pounds of fine flour at an average rate of 80 pounds per hour. A mill of this capacity would be suitable for use by larger groups such as extended families and local community or church groups.

David Gering is a manufacturer of commercial food processing equipment in Nampa, Idaho. In 1987, at the request of Welfare Services, David developed a unique can sealer for dry-pack food storage. Gering sealers are in Welfare Services home storage centers in the U.S. and Canada and are owned by many wards, stakes, and families.

Don Calder is a man with a soft heart, creative mind, and blacksmith skills. He freely shares his plans for making grain grinding and home gardening tools. Don and Marilyn have served several missions and completed a two-year assignment for the Benson Institute teaching agricultural practices in Mexico and Guatemala.

Larry and Marie Busby have served missions in South America and the Dominican Republic, teaching welfare principles. As part of their assignments, they traveled widely teaching gardening, food drying, and food storage. Ask them about how inexpensive and simple it is to store dry foods in used PETE plastic bottles.

James Kennard is the president of Food for Everyone Foundation. Jim is a great resource for information about family based vegetable gardening. His goal is to, “Teach the world to grow food, one family at a time.”

Dean Eliason is the manager of the Bishops’ Storehouse Services Quality Assurance Lab. **Michelle Lloyd** has been supervising the BYU Food Quality Assurance Lab and is actively involved in food storage research. Dean and Michelle are good resources for answers to questions about food storage shelf life and nutritional adequacy.

Thank you