

To: Stake leaders, Bishops, Relief Society Presidents, Ward Family and Emergency Preparedness Specialists  
From: Gayle-Marie Noga and Pam Anderson  
RE: Emergency and Family Preparedness Theme for the year 1999

After much prayer I have chosen the theme which we should follow for the year 1999, which has been derived from the book of Proverbs 6:6-8; 30:25.

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest..." "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepared their meat in the summer."



Aesop's writes in his fable "The Ants and the Grasshopper":

"One fine day in winter some ants were busy drying their store of corn, which had got rather damp during a long spell of rain. Presently up came a grasshopper and begged them to spare her a few grains. "For," she said, "I'm simply starving." The ants stopped work for a moment, though this was against their principles. "May we ask," said they, "what you were doing with yourself all last summer?" Why didn't you collect a store of food for the winter?" "The fact is," replied the grasshopper, "I was so busy singing that I hadn't the time." "If you spent the summer singing," replied the ants, "you can't do better than spend the winter dancing." And they chuckled and went on with their work.

Are we more like the ants or the grasshopper? Like in the parable of the ten virgins are we foolish or wise with our time, talents, and progress. Are we working to become better prepared spiritually, financially (out of consumer debt), physically, socially, do we understand the scriptures, and are we following the word of the Lord? If not, each of us needs to become better prepared. Our food storage is just a part of our progress, and as we approach the year 2000 more people will realize that they may not be as prepared as they thought. We already see an increase use of the cannery, and other suppliers can't keep up with demand. Let us not be caught unprepared.

#### Spiritual Preparedness

We have also been asked to prepare to enter the Holy Temples. This is a great comfort and blessing for all that partake. I hope and pray each of you have a current recommend and are attending at least once a year. We were asked to be prepared by purchasing our Temple clothing. Have you done so? Do you have your four-generation group sheets ready? Yes, this is also part of being prepared. We encourage each and every one of you to get this done. Have you read your scriptures and learned our hymns? Are you placing a drop of oil in your lamps and lighting your way to the Lord? If not, it's time to reevaluate.

#### Financial Preparedness

President Hinckley stated, "But I am suggesting that the time has come to get our houses in order. So many of our people are living on the very edge of their incomes. In fact, some are living on borrowings. There is a portent of stormy weather ahead to which we had better give heed' "Pay the debt thou hast contracted with the printer. Release thyself from bondage" (D&C 19:35). I urge you, brethren (sisters), to look to the condition of your finances. I urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay off debt as quickly as you can, and free yourselves from bondage. I pray that we prepare ourselves without increasing our debt.

#### Physically Prepared

Are we getting in shape? I don't mean just losing weight, but are we getting our muscles in shape. If you spend most of your time behind a desk are you getting enough exercise? During times of stress, exercise helps people to better cope.

#### Socially Prepared

Are we attending our meetings? Are we building lasting friendships? Are we being good neighbors? If not, maybe we need to do a better job. Ants are a social group; they work together, play together and get the job done. They also take care of each other throughout their lifetimes. Grasshoppers are mostly alone, their social structure is to stay by themselves and take care of themselves. They do not prepare for lean times.

It is my prayer that we are more like the wise ants and not like the foolish grasshoppers. Let us fill our crucibles with oil and store our grain, work for a better understanding of our roles in this life and become better children of our Father in Heaven.

Prayerfully,  
Gayle-Marie Noga  
Stake Emergency Preparedness Specialists  
Pam Anderson  
Stake Family Preparedness Specialists

