

## The LDS Model: Connecting Spiritual and Physical

Tyler Hendricks  
January 20, 2018



We are continuing our exploration of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS). Like the Catholics, the LDS has a robust integration of life on earth with spirit world. This integration is mediated by ceremonial markings of achievements both spiritual (stages of life, endowment of spiritual gifts) and physical (church positions).

Every worthy member commences their formal spiritual path from age 12, with membership in the Aaronic priesthood (males) or Young Women and then Relief Society (females). Male and female follow parallel tracks involving study of church

teachings and organization, congregational service and two years of missionary life.

Then come marriage and family life. All families gather weekly for study, sharing and recreation (the Family Home Evening) and host a monthly visit by "home teachers." Spiritual growth is marked by Temple "endowments" of spiritual gifts.

Members manage the church as volunteers (there are no paid positions). Local wards have myriad positions: Bishop, secretary, presidents of "auxiliaries" (Young Men, Relief Society, Young Women, Sunday School), facilities representative, activities committee chairman, Temple and family history consultant, music chairman, auditors, welfare and employment specialists, seminary and Institute teachers, deacons, and more. Many require three people: a president and two counselors.

The path to public service begins with a calling from the Bishop. He and his two counselors consider those who are eligible to fill a particular position. A vetting process ensues involving prayer, "waiting on the spirit," consultation, and an interview with the person called. If the person accepts the calling, his or her name is submitted during a Sunday "Sacrament meeting" for a sustaining vote.

The sustaining vote is the LDS form of election. It consists of a hand-raise by which members can sustain or dissent from the call. "Typically, the vote is unanimous. If there is a dissenting vote, the person dissenting is consulted ... There is discussion and we work things out until there is a unanimous vote." There are no secret ballots; procedures are public and corporate.

The occupant of every LDS calling from local to global is sustained regularly. Thereby the congregation participates in each member's path of life. "Normally ... every active adult member and every active youth from the age of 12 has a calling of some kind and has been sustained in Sacrament meeting." For world-level leadership, the global congregation sustains or dissents. How does that happen? Stay tuned.

*(References: Thanks to Dr. Tom Bowers, blessed couple and LDS leader, for advice; [www.lds.org/topics/home-teaching?lang=eng](http://www.lds.org/topics/home-teaching?lang=eng); "2010 Handbook 2," [www.lds.org/handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church?lang=eng](http://www.lds.org/handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church?lang=eng).)*