

The Aaronic Priest

The Office of Priest

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March, 2024

Introduction

Christ's Church and His priesthood in these latter days must parallel and adhere to the commandments, standards, and pattern of His Church as established in His own days on earth and restored through the prophet Joseph Smith, Jr.

The expectations of priesthood, the way priesthood members are called, and the need for priesthood's authoritative ordination reveal but a glimpse into the mind and will of the Father for the greater good of His Church.

Introduction

The structure and overall nature of priesthood reflect His wisdom and commission for us today. The Aaronic priesthood is by design a preparatory priesthood that continues and abides forever, along with the “greater priesthood.”

As evidenced in the wisdom of the Lord, ordinances established by Christ himself allow the power of godliness to be manifest to us in the flesh, and enable man to behold the face of God and live (D&C 83:3).

In this process, the role of the Aaronic priest cannot be overlooked in the accomplishment of His work, as it educates, supports, and makes ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:17).

Introduction

Of necessity and in perfect harmony with the order of priesthood is the office of Aaronic priest. Without this office and the proper performance of the duties of the priest, the church would suffer tremendously.

The priest must be aware of the duties and responsibilities of his office and must commit to a life of service in the fulfilling of this calling.

Lesson 1

Unit 1

The Nature of Priesthood

Being commissioned of Jesus Christ and acting with authority as a member of His priesthood is an awe-inspiring task. This responsibility is not to be taken lightly nor undertaken by one's own whim or personal desire. Briefly stated, **men are called to priesthood office through a divine calling from God.**

A frequently cited reference related to this is found in the New Testament book of Hebrews:

***Hebrews 5:4** And no man taketh this honor unto himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*

Although in context, this reference is applied specifically to the High Priesthood, it is true for all who are called.

Lesson 1 Unit 1

The Nature of Priesthood

The process of calling and ordaining a man to priesthood looks the same throughout the church but may have slight nuances depending on the situation. Through avenues such as testimony, vision, or voice, God may reveal a priesthood call to a Presiding Elder or Pastor.

When this call is authoritatively received by a pastor (or perhaps other Elders if in an unorganized area), and is presented to and accepted by the candidate, approval must be given by the body of members to which the candidate will serve.

Lesson 1

Unit 1

The Nature of Priesthood

Once this call, acceptance, and approval take place, the candidate may be ordained by those with the authority to do so. In the case of the Aaronic Priest, he may be ordained by someone holding the Melchisedec Priesthood or by another Aaronic Priest.

***D&C 17:12 a,b** Every elder, priest, teacher, or deacon is to be ordained according to the gifts and callings of God unto him; and he is to be ordained by the power of the Holy Ghost which is in the one who ordains him.*

Lesson 1

Unit 1

The Nature of Priesthood

***D&C 17:16a** No person is to be ordained to any office in this church, where there is a regularly organized branch of the same, without the vote of that church.*

***Mosiah 11:17-20** And now Alma was their high priest, he being the founder of their church. And it came to pass that none received authority to preach or to teach, except it were by him from God. Therefore he consecrated all their priests, and all their teachers, and none were consecrated except they were just men. Therefore they did watch over their people, and did nourish them with things pertaining to righteousness.*

***Alma 4:1** And now it came to pass that after Alma had made an end of speaking unto the people of the church, which was established in the city of Zarahemla, he ordained priests and elders, by laying on his hands according to the order of God, to preside and watch over the church.*

Lesson 1

Unit 1

The Nature of Priesthood

Each priesthood member is recognized in their office within the branch where he was approved. Although this authority may be granted and ordination be done locally within a branch, this authority is regarded as carrying on to all branches of the Church insomuch as they too accept that call and ordination.

Lesson 1 Unit 1

The Nature of Priesthood

Ordained members of the priesthood should carry certification (card) with them as they travel to branches that may not be familiar with their credentials or standing. When moving or relocating to a different branch, a certificate verifying this authority may be provided/requested by the new branch.

Circumstances or situations may arise where a man's office may not be accepted in another branch. Though disapproval is not common, a vetting process is part of the rights of every congregation in acceptance of that man to serve in that particular branch in the office to which he was ordained.