

Turning Hearts

A family history consultant may inadvertently discourage members who are beginning their family history. Some members may feel intimidated by the many names, event dates and places, ordinances, etc., which seem to be required on a blank family group record or pedigree chart. During initial visits, some members may feel pressure to remember all of the details about their family. As a family history consultant, make no judgments about the number of facts a member may know. Instead, provide understanding and gentle encouragement. Offer to help members learn more about their family.

One purpose of involving members in family history work is to "turn their hearts to their fathers." This can be done in many ways. While performing ordinances in the temples for our ancestors is the desired outcome, various activities can lead to that goal. Initial visits in a member's home are successful even if the only thing accomplished is talking about the family's history, looking at family photographs, or examining documents relating to the family's past. One option is to start by asking, "Tell me about your family." Consultants should patiently encourage and assist more hesitant beginners, not push them sooner than they are willing or able. Elder L. Whitney Clayton said:

Be careful to encourage faith, to encourage a desire to begin and to continue, to encourage confidence, and to help members have success experiences. When members feel that their faith in the Lord and in themselves is growing as a consequence of what you help them to do, you will have done your job, and done it well. (Fireside address, November 8, 2007)

This statement echoes Elder Dallin H. Oaks' direction, when he said:

All members should participate by prayerfully selecting those ways that fit their personal circumstances at a particular time Our effort is not to compel everyone to do everything, but to encourage everyone to do something. (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, "Family History: In Wisdom and in Order," *Ensign*, June 1989, p. 6)

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