

10 Practical Ways to Prepare for an LDS Mission

Being able to serve an LDS mission is a marvelous and life-changing opportunity but it is also difficult- one of the hardest things you will ever do. Properly preparing to become a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will greatly help you in adjusting to the work and lifestyle of serving a mission.



1. Learn the Basics of Living on Your Own

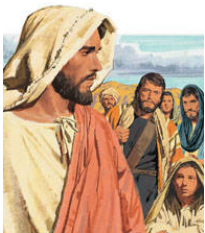
Some of the basics of becoming self-sufficient that you should know include:

How to do laundry, how to cook several simple meals, how to use a checkbook and manage your money, how to clean (your bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, etc.), how to sew on a button and mend a tear, how to change a flat tire on a car or fix a flat tire on a bike. It's not that hard to find the help you need to learn these basic tools. Practicing these skills will increase your confidence and ability to be self-sufficient.



2. Develop a Habit of Daily Scripture Study and Prayer

One of the most important aspects of daily life as a missionary is effectively studying the word of God. *Every day* of their mission, LDS missionaries study on their own as well as with their companion. They also study with other missionaries at district meetings and zone conferences. The sooner you develop a daily habit, and learn how to more effectively study the scriptures, the easier it will be for you to adjust to missionary life. The book of Mormon, & other scriptures, and the missionary manual, "Preach My Gospel" will be especially beneficial in preparing for your mission. Making a habit of daily prayer and scripture study will be one of your biggest assets in developing your spirituality as a missionary.



3. Gain a Personal Testimony

LDS missionaries teach others about the gospel of Jesus Christ including the truthfulness of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the restoration of the gospel, the prophet Joseph Smith, and *The Book of Mormon*. Do you know these things are true? If you're not sure, or have little nagging doubts then now is the time to gain a strong testimony of these truths. Strengthening your testimony of each principle of the gospel will greatly help you to be more prepared as a missionary. One way to get started is to learn how to receive personal revelation.

4. Work with Local Missionaries

One of the best ways to understand what it means to be a missionary is to work with your local full-time missionaries and ward mission leader. Going on splits (team teaching) with them will help you learn how to teach investigators; approaches new contacts, and focus on the work. Ask the missionaries what you can do to prepare for your LDS mission as well as how to help them in their current work.



5. Get Regular Exercise and Eat Healthier

Serving an LDS mission is physically rigorous, especially for missionaries that walk or bike the majority of their mission. Be prepared by becoming healthier through regular exercise and eating better. If you have extra weight, now is the time to lose some of it. Losing weight is very basic- eat less and work out more. Even if you begin by just walking 30 minutes each day you will be so much more prepared when you enter the mission field. Increasing your daily exercise, eating fruits and vegetables, and drinking more water will be extremely beneficial in preparing for an LDS mission. Waiting to become more physically fit until you start your mission will only make it harder to adjust to life as a missionary.

6. Receive Your Patriarchal Blessing

A patriarchal blessing is a blessing from the Lord, kind of like your own personal chapter of scripture that is specifically given to you. If you haven't yet received your patriarchal blessing now would be the perfect time to prepare to do so. Regularly reading and reviewing your blessing will greatly help you before, during, and after serving an LDS mission. Once you've received your blessing it is very beneficial to learn how to use your patriarchal blessing as you personally apply the counsel, warnings, and guidance you've received from the Lord.



7. Early to Bed, Early to Rise

LDS missionaries live by a strict daily schedule. The day starts by arising from bed at 6:30 and ends by retiring at 10:30. Whether you're a morning person or an evening person it will most likely be an adjustment for you to wake up and go to bed at such a specific time each day. That's why adjusting your sleeping pattern now is a wonderful way to prepare for your mission. The less you have to change later the easier it will be to adjust to the life of an LDS mission. If this seems impossible, start small by picking one end of the day (morning or night) and go to bed (or wake up) an hour earlier than you usually do. After one week add another hour. The longer you consistently do this the easier it will be.

8. Start Saving Money Now

The sooner you start saving money for your LDS mission the more prepared you'll be. Begin a mission fund by setting aside money you earn or receive from employment, allowance, and gifts from others. Consult with family and friends about opening a savings account (or something similar) to keep your money safe. Working and saving money for a mission will also benefit you in other ways, both as a missionary and after you're released, by learning the value of hard work, the fulfillment for a job well done, and how to wisely spend money. Putting forth the time and effort it takes to save money for an LDS mission will also greatly increase your ability to continue pressing forward when those tough days come and you're tempted to give up.



9. Share Your Testimony & Invite Others

One of the basics of serving a mission is sharing your testimony and inviting others to learn more, attend church, and be baptized. While preparing for your mission work to step outside of your comfort zone and share your testimony with others every chance you get, including at church, at home, with friends and neighbors, and even with strangers. Also practices inviting others to do things, such as attend an activity, fireside, Family Home Evening, or church with you, meet with the missionaries, or just to come over for dinner. For some of you this will be especially hard which is why this step will be especially important for you to work on.

10. Live the Commandments

Serving an LDS mission involves following specific rules, such as always being with your companion, dressing appropriately, and only listening to approved music. Obeying the rules in the *Missionary Handbook*, and additional rules from your mission president, are essential to serving a mission. Breaking rules will lead to disciplinary action and possible dismissal from the mission. Basic commandments include: word of wisdom, tithing, modesty, law of chastity, church attendance. Being obedient to the basic commandments now is not only an excellent way to prepare for your mission but also necessary to be able to serve a mission. Following the advice from your church leaders will greatly help you as you prepare for a mission.



Some great Church talks include:

- Raising the Bar, L. Tom Perry – October 2006 General Conference
- Becoming a Missionary David A. Bednar – Oct. 2005 General conference
- How to Prepare to Be a Good Missionary, M. Russell Ballard March 2007 New Era
- 2007 March New Era – all about preparing for your mission – a must have!

“The Lord has given no greater charge to His people than sharing the gospel with our Heavenly Father’s children. Missionaries take people out of the darkness of the world and lead them to the safety and light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To find and teach and baptize and confirm someone who has never paid much attention to God or to Christ and His great atoning sacrifice is one of the greatest services a priesthood holder can provide. We know the purpose of life. The rest of the world doesn’t. It rests on the shoulders of every young man to prepare himself to declare that message to the world. It is exciting work.

And young women? What is their responsibility?

A full-time mission is totally appropriate for a young woman, if that is what she wants to do and she is worthy. Holding the priesthood comes with the obligation for young men to carry the message of the Restoration to the world. Young women are invited to participate in missionary work as it is appropriate to their circumstances. If they have prospects for marriage, that is a higher calling. But young women who are in a position to serve make great missionaries. They are good teachers, they have empathy, and they can relate particularly well to women. I don’t think that we have a mission anywhere in the world where the mission president wouldn’t be thrilled to get more sister missionaries.” ~ How to Prepare to Be a Good Missionary, M. Russell Ballard March 2007 New Era

References:

Rachel Bruner – about.lds.com
LDS.org – several conferences, ensign talks
Mormonmissionprep.com