



President and Sister Staples at Empty Nester Stake Fireside “Who are You” - January 7, 2019

We are gathered here on a cold, dark Monday night as friends, neighbors and believers. This is a super informal opportunity to get to know one another. We will do this by playing a game. I'll pick a subject from the board. Raise your hand and I'll call on you. Please give your name and ward before responding. The first category in our Who are you Game? is:

COLLECTIONS – Who has a collection? What do you collect?

Diane Stokoe, 3rd Ward: I collect “Tree of Life” pictures, prints and such items from various countries we visit. I have a “Tree of Life” Mural in my home.

Mark Aldridge, 9th Ward: Since returning from my mission I've purchased a church book per month. I have a room full of church books. My favorite is “Teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith.”

Joy Gough, 3rd Ward: Steve and I collect rocks.

Mark Hale, 2nd Ward: My wife and I collect Christmas ornaments from the countries we visit.

Barbara Olsen, 7th Ward: I collect fridge magnets.

IMMIGRANTS – who among us are immigrants or children of immigrants?

Don Bigelow, 1st Ward – Immigrated from East Germany

Shawn Mitchel, 2nd Ward - immigrated from Germany in 1954.

Selma Yagi, 2nd Ward – My father immigrated from Japan at age 17 and worked in the U.S. for several years. He then returned to Japan and married my 17-year-old mother.

Janine Coles, 3rd Ward – My mother was born in Belgium.

Carol West, 7th Ward – My parents immigrated from Sweden.

Asialene Smith, 4th Ward – My father born in the Philippines.

Catherine Morgan, 7th Ward – My parents lived in Colonial Juarez, Mexico. My mother crossed the boarder into Texas to deliver her children.

DISASTERS – Who has been in a natural disaster?

Julie Bigelow, 1st Ward – lived in Southern California and experienced earthquakes in 1988 and 1990.

Heather & Tom Pioline, Ward - while serving a mission they experienced an earthquake in Nepal where 9,000 people died.

Melvin & Carol Butler, 7th Ward - survived two hurricanes in the South Pacific while serving a mission there.

LETTERS – Who has the most letters in their last name? 1st Ward - Pat Robertson, 2nd Ward; Doug Wadsworth, 2nd Ward, and Orson Christiansen.

RELATIVES – Who is related to someone famous? One person was related to John Taylor, another to Hyrum Smith, one to Willard Richards, and one sister was a 2nd cousin to Russell M. Nelson.

SERVICE – Who served in the Military? 1 Air Force, 4 Army. Who has the highest rank? Staff Sergeant and a Captain.

MISSIONS - Who has served the most missions? 4th Ward – one couple served as Mission President in Tonga and Fiji. Then served a mission in New Zealand. Finally, they served an inner-city mission.

HOUSE – Number of years lived in the stake? - Greg Curtis, 1st Ward, 4 different houses from age 12 until present. Brice and Caralee Drennan, 7th Ward, from April 1969 almost 50 years. President and Sister Shurtleff, 3rd Ward, have lived in the same house for 54 years.

SAY IT – Who speaks the most languages. Tom Hunter?, Ward? - English, Swedish, German and French. Davis Smith and Asialene, 4th Ward both speak Spanish, Portuguese, and English.

WORK IT - Who has stayed at the same job for 50 years? Shawn Mitchell, 2nd Ward - Real Estate company and Don Bigelow 1st Ward – a Dentist.

MOST UNUSUAL JOB - Julie Bigelow, 1st Ward - Union Carbine Hard Hat supervisor. Annette Mitchell, 2nd Ward - First woman Stock Broker. Mark Hale, 2nd Ward – in 1992 he was a traffic control broadcaster on TV broadcasting from the Washington Monument. A woman in First Ward was a match-maker for 12 couples.

FAMOUS – Who met someone famous?

Joy Gough, 3rd Ward - was kissed on the cheek by President Trump while taking photos of him when he visited Utah during the campaign.

Steve Gough, 3rd Ward – met President Nelson and members of the twelve while driving church officials around.

Bill Coles, 3rd Ward – met Margaret Thatcher

Christine Nelson, 7th Ward - met Hollywood actors and directors while working at the Sundance Film Festival.

Sister Staples

We enjoyed hearing your stories and getting better acquainted with you. Many of you know our story. Joe and I met in Las Vegas while working at a movie theater. He was an usher and I was the candy girl. He was a convert of six months when we started a great friendship. I wrote to him while he was on his mission. When he returned, we both attended BYU and got engaged four months later. We have been married 37 years and have five children. All of them live in Utah except for a daughter who lives in Arizona. We have fifteen grand-children and have lived in Utah for 16 years.

ABOUT SALT

President Staples illustrated his talk with a small jar of soil and salt

According to the historians, “Salt at one time had religious significance, and was a symbol of purity. . .” Among many peoples, salt is still used as a sign of honor, friendship and hospitality. The Arabs say “there is salt between us,’ meaning ‘we have eaten together, and are friends.” (World Book Encyclopedia, 1978, 17:69.)

The Organizer and Creator of this world understood perfectly the nature and importance of salt. More than thirty-five references to this substance are found in the scriptures. In the old Testament, mention is made of a ‘covenant of salt’ (see Lev. 2:13; Numbers 18:19, and 2 Chronicles 13:5.) In the new Testament the Savior referred to his disciples as the “salt of the

earth,” and charged them to retain their savor (Matthew 5:13.) He repeated this charge to his chosen disciples on the American continent:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the salt of the earth, but if the salt shall lose its savor, wherewith shall the earth be salted. The salt shall be thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men” (3 Nephi 12: 13.)

In 1833 Joseph Smith received a revelation which included these instructions: “When men are called into mine everlasting gospel, and covenant with an everlasting covenant, they are accounted as the salt of the earth and the savor of men”.

“They are called to be the savor of men” (D&C 101:39-40.) The word savor (s-a-v-o-r) denotes taste, pleasing flavor, interesting quality, and high repute.

A world-renowned chemist told me that salt will not lose its savor with age. Savor is lost through mixture and contamination. Similarly, priesthood power does not dissipate with age; it, too, is lost through mixture and contamination.

The Prophet Joseph Smith received these instructions from the Lord:

“For they were set to be a light unto the world, and to be the saviors of men.”

“And inasmuch as they are not the saviors of men, they are as salt that has lost its savor (D&C 103:9.)

One of the grandest concepts in the gospel of Jesus Christ is the concept that men can and should be more than passive observers in the cause of saving souls. One Church leader taught: “In our pre-existent state. . . we made a certain agreement with the Almighty. . . We agreed . . . to be not only saviors for ourselves but measurably, saviors for the whole human family. We went into a partnership with the Lord. The working out of the plan became not merely the Father’s work, and the Savior’s work, but also our work.” (John A. Widtsoe, Utah Genealogical and historical magazine, Oct. 1934, p. 189.)

Bible Facts

- Under the law of Moses, priests put salt on all of the offerings of grains and meats before placing them on the altar (see Leviticus 2:13; Ezekiel 43: 23-24.)
- The temple in Jerusalem required huge amounts of salt for preparing offerings and tanning hides. Jewish tradition says salt was sprinkled on the ramp leading to the altar so that the priests would not slip. Herod’s temple included a salt chamber to store all the necessary salt.
- The phrase “covenant of salt” is used in the Old Testament to signify the desirable and everlasting nature of covenants between God and man (see Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:5.)

- Anciently, salt was not scarce in the holy land. There was a large mine near the Dead Sea and shallow evaporation pools along the Mediterranean coast.

Our Covenant Duty as the Salt of the Earth

“those who are baptized in the Church of Jesus Christ make covenants. In modern revelation the Lord declared,

“When men are called unto mine everlasting gospel, and covenant with an everlasting covenant, they are accounted as the salt of the earth and the savor of men.” (D&C 101:39.) To perform our covenant duty as the salt of the earth, we must be different from those around us.

“This requires us to make some changes from our family culture, our ethnic culture, or our national culture. We must change all elements of our behavior that are in conflict with gospel commandments, covenants, and culture.” Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Repentance and Change,” Ensign, November 2003 p. 39.

SALT

- **Prevents decay.** As individuals, we can be personally sanctified through covenants. As a group, those who make and keep sacred covenants can halt the spread of moral decay by living righteously and being a force for good. Sometime, they can help prevent the judgments of God from falling on societies that have ripened in iniquity or over ripened and rotted (see, Helaman 13:14.)
- **Makes things last.** Throughout the scriptures, God refers to His everlasting covenant,” promising us eternal blessings (see Topical Guide, “New and Everlasting Covenant”). Those who make and keep covenants also work to spread those covenants throughout the world, extending eternal blessings to more and more of heavenly Father’s children. As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: “The Key to this work is the keeping of covenants by individuals.” (“Keeping Covenants: A Message for Those Who will Serve a Mission,” New Era, January 2013, p. 4)
- **Enhances flavor.** Our covenants allow us to have the gift of the Holy Ghost, which enhances our spiritual capabilities and purifies our natural feelings. Righteous covenant keepers who are spread throughout the world make the world a better place to live in and are pleasing to Heavenly Father, because they help bring salvation to His children.