

## 2

### PROVIDENCE AND PRAYER

Mormonism has a rich prayer tradition. Indeed, the very existence of this restored tradition began in the simple prayer of a young boy to learn God's will concerning which church he should join. Joseph Smith read in the epistle of James: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). As a result of his faith that he could ask and be answered, Joseph Smith prayed and then entered into a genuine back-and-forth dialogue with God. Perhaps the most repeated commandment in the revelations given to Joseph Smith is: "Ask and ye shall receive; knock and it shall be opened unto you" (D&C 4:7; 6:5; 8:1; 11:5; 12:5; 14:5; 29:6; 42:3, 61; 49:26; 66:9; 75:27; 88:63; 101:27; 103:35). In response to Joseph's innocent request, God disclosed both himself and his will regarding Joseph. Indeed, the majority of the revelations received by Joseph Smith are the result of questions that he or others posed and revelatory answers came in response to prayer.

Joseph Smith himself had a very profound and sincere prayer life. One can hardly read his journal without being struck by how easily and naturally Joseph Smith slipped from writing his journal to writing a prayer. For example, on December 22, 1835, Joseph Smith wrote in his diary:

At home. Continued my studys O God give me learning even Language and indo [endue] me with qualifcations to magnify his name while I live I also deliv[er]ed an address to the Church this Evening the Lord blessed my Soul, my Scribe also is unwell O my God heal him and for his kindness to me O my soul be thou greatful to him and he shall be