

Interfaith Voices GT Column: The Link Between Faith and Preparedness

By Alice Henderson Rampton

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If you are reading this column before noon today and are interested in how you can be better prepared for an emergency, then put the paper down or close your computer and head to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints building on 1205 N.W. Walnut Blvd. in Corvallis.

From 9 a.m. to noon today, an emergency preparedness Seminar is being held with speakers from the Benton County Sheriff's Office, the Oregon State University emergency department, and Community Emergency Response Team trained volunteers.

The keynote speaker will be OSU's Mike Bamberger, addressing earthquake preparation and the Cascadia Subduction Zone.

But how does preparedness fit into a faith-based column? Preparedness is a way to strengthen and build our communities as people unite during a natural disaster. But it can also benefit individuals and families during more common emergencies such as illness, loss of employment, or a death in the family.

The Doctrine and Covenants is a book which LDS members view as scriptures for this day. In the 38th section of this book are found these words: "If you are prepared you shall not fear." Since the 1800s, leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have emphasized being prepared for the emergencies of life. That is probably why Ted Koppel's latest book, "Lights Out," which examines the effects of a cyberattack on America's electric grid, dedicates three of its 20 chapters to the LDS church's emphasis on being prepared. I highly recommend all 20 chapters of this book.

A 2007 booklet, entitled "All is Safely Gathered In," included this message from LDS church leaders: "Our Heavenly Father created this beautiful earth, with all its abundance, for our benefit and use. He has lovingly commanded us to "prepare every needful thing" so that, should adversity come, we may care for ourselves and our neighbors and support bishops as they care for others. We encourage Church members worldwide to prepare for adversity in life by having a basic supply of food and water and some money in savings. We ask that you be wise as you store food and water and build your savings. Do not go to extremes; it is not prudent, for example, to go into debt to establish your food storage all at once. With careful planning, you can, over time, establish a home storage supply and a financial reserve. We realize that some of you may not have financial resources or space for such storage. Some of you may be prohibited by law from storing large amounts of food. We encourage you to store as much as circumstances allow."

In preparation for this column, my husband Mark and I decided to walk the talk. We figured out how to get our generator and walkie talkies working, restocked our pantry, bought a 175-hour lantern and batteries, and added water supplies. These are just a few steps, but they gave us confidence that we might be able to benefit ourselves, neighbors, and others in an emergency.

In Benton and Linn counties, the most likely natural disasters include earthquakes, floods, ice storms, and fires. Each emergency has its own personality and requirements to overcome, but by having food, water and a financial reserve, you will have less fear and be able to extend a confident hand to others.

If you missed the seminar this morning, go to the Benton County Emergency Management's preparedness website <https://www.co.benton.or.us/sheriff/page/emergency-management> or the LDS church's website <https://providentliving.lds.org>. The site includes many ideas about what to store and how to be prepared. It doesn't take much and yet, "when you are prepared you shall not fear."