

Dark Days

This winter, with the sky cloudy and much of the news negative, it has felt both emotionally and physically dark to many people. It has been prophesied that the world will grow dark in the Last Days, and President Nelson has said we are living in the Last Days. It is a bit depressing to think that we will be living in days surrounded by darkness, but this does not have to be so. If you listen to talks by Christ's prophets and apostles of our day, many of them are filled with joy and hope, and all of them are filled with "the light of Christ." President Nelson said, "The Lord would have us look to the future with joyful anticipation." When things are dark we too can be filled with this light. Here are three things that can help.

Gratitude—One of the first assignments in the Church's Emotional Resilience self-reliance course is to write in a gratitude journal daily and express gratitude in prayer. There is something almost magical in this formula of actually writing gratitude down as well as expressing it. It is amazing how being mindful of and expressing gratitude can influence a positive outlook on life, making it feel light.

Service—Our day is one of paying a lot of attention to self: what we want, how we look, how others see us, how we feel, doing it our way.... With all of that "feeding of self" you would think we would be "full and happy," but often the opposite is true. When we step out of the rut of paying so much attention to self and make the effort to notice and lift others instead, we are lifted as well. All through the scriptures we are admonished to forget self and serve those around us. The Lord blesses us for helping to serve others, and in turn Him. One of those blessings is an extra portion of His Spirit which brings happiness and spiritual light. *World experts in

disaster relief organizations have reported that the people who recover from serious trauma and disasters fastest and best are those who are helping others. This is a good thing to remember.

Read and Listen—The words of our prophets and apostles both ancient and modern are filled with light. As you study these words you are taking in truths that bring light into your life.

Shelf-Stable

If you don't know this term and what it really means, now is the time to get acquainted. Shelf-stable foods are those that can be kept on a shelf without refrigeration (or freezing) for months without spoiling. These are usually the things that are found in the center of the grocery store on shelves. It is the stuff in bags, cans, and boxes (not the freezer section) that you need to think of when considering shelf-stable foods.

Having a 3-month supply of foods you eat on a regular basis is one of the Church-wide basics of family preparedness. While a few things in the freezer might count in some circumstances, it is a good idea to base most of your short-term/three-month supply on shelf-stable foods.

Can you make a meal using only shelf-stable foods? Granted, this is not the way most people cook now. Old cook books before the 1960s can help you with ideas. Surprisingly, you can create decent meals from only shelf-stable foods. They don't have a lot of ingredients, and they are often cheap to prepare.

*Here is the challenge for this month. Try three new dishes made with shelf-stable ingredients. When you find one your family likes gather enough ingredients that you can make it at least 3 times and build up.

Light

In a power outage, what do you have for back-up light? Some people have a back-up generator. Some people have flashlights with a whole bunch of extra batteries that they keep current on a regular basis regardless of cost and maintenance. Some people have lamps with extra lamp oil. Some people have candles. (Care should be taken with these.) The latest is rechargeable solar lights.

There are more good options on the internet than I can fit here. All have their advantages and disadvantages. YouTube has some good videos if you look under *emergency light*. If you do not have good sources of alternative light to last for at least two weeks, now is a good time to consider this need and take the time to fill the gaps in your preps. The important thing is not to have fancy things, but to have something to fall back on.

*This is also a good time to pick up a few extra hand warmer packets for a 72-hour kit or to have on hand as well.

Egg Substitutes

You have probably noticed that eggs are expensive and sometimes hard to get. While there is no substitute for a nice fried egg, there are good substitutes for eggs in baking or sometimes other forms of cooking.

You can substitute white beans or tofu in some dishes that have chunks of egg.

You can mix equal parts chickpea flour and water and let it sit for 3–5 minutes. Then stir and cook it like an omelet.

Aqua Fava (liquid off canned beans)—Garbanzo beans/chick peas work the best for whipping into a meringue-type topping. Chill, whip like egg whites, and add some sugar and vanilla. The liquid of other beans can be used as an egg replacement in baking. $\frac{1}{4}$ cup = 1 egg.

1 T Ground Flax seed + 3 T water or 1 T Chia seed + $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water = 1 egg—This helps to bind meat loaf or meat balls, or in baking, but it does not help with leavening.

Applesauce, pureed pumpkin, or mashed banana, yogurt, buttermilk, or silken tofu— $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of one of these = 1 egg. These help with texture, binding, and moisture, but they do not add leavening, so use in recipe that has leavening or add $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. soda with each “egg worth.”

Here are two great links to learn more or print a chart:

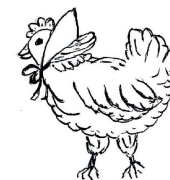
<https://www.biggerbolderbaking.com/egg-substitutes-for-baking/>

<https://www.thepioneerwoman.com/food-cooking/cooking-tips-tutorials/g33584750/egg-substitute/>

Retro, Shelf-Stable Dinner—Tuna Casserole

$\frac{1}{2}$ pound pasta (I like egg noodles), cooked just to tender through. Drain pasta. Add a 5 oz. can of tuna (undrained), a 10.5 oz. can of cream of celery or cream of chicken soup, $\frac{1}{2}$ the soup can of water, and salt and pepper to taste. You can dress it up with sautéed onions, celery and/or cheese, and bake until hot through. Some people even add corn flakes or potato chips to the top with cheese, but it is not bad with just the shelf-stable 3 ingredients. Make it a whole meal by adding canned green beans and canned fruit to the side. *Serves 2–4 depending on age and appetite.

Notes from Red Hen



Dear Cousin Speckle,

For three years we have been left alone in our little coop as if no one even knew we were alive. There hasn't even been a rooster on the premises. All of a sudden, there are three roosters in the big coop where most of the chickens are, and another roaming around the farm scoping out all of the independent hens (me and my last chicks). The farmer's wife has been coming right into my neat little coop and raiding our eggs too! Today she even grabbed the roaming rooster and put him in my coop!! Of all the nerve! I have been trying to figure out why all of a sudden things have changed so drastically. Cat says that she heard the price of eggs has tripled in the last year, and both eggs and chickens are valuable. Just as I think I have my life well ordered, something changes. What is happening on your farm?

*Your cousin always,
Red*