

Transition Times

*What to Expect
for Your Ministry*

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Being in Transition Means...

- An **Ending** has taken place
- There is a **Time In Between**
- A **New Beginning** has not yet occurred

*Transitions are about the **Time In Between**.
How do we experience these times?*

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Experiencing Time In Between

- For some, it is a time of **joyful anticipation and planning** for the new thing to come (like Advent, like pregnancy)
- For others, it can be a period of **anxiety and confusion**
- Others will experience the stages of **grief** from loss of a pastor: denial, anger, depression, bargaining, acceptance

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Experiencing Time In Between

- In all cases, the time in between is a **changing situation**
- What was **“Normal”** has left the building (= Ending)
- Everything is in a state of **Becoming** prior to the new beginning

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Transition in Scripture

- The Exodus (ending)
- The Wilderness Experience (transition)
- The Promised Land (new beginning)

*For the people of God, the promised new beginning is always **filled with hope** that aids those in the transition*

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The Hebrew Word *Wilderness*

- A place apart from words ... Where words do not work
- A place where you can't say what **IT** is
- The in-between is that place where we don't know the words yet to describe **IT**, and we can't define for sure what **IT** is.

Frederick Niedner
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The Wilderness

In God's hands,
Transition Times
can be
Transformational

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Transition as Transformation

- The Wilderness experience was a time of **re-forming as a people of God** (Ex.6:7)
- A time for **faith renewal** = learning to trust God (Num.14:20f)
- Also a **testing of that faith** (Ex.20:20)

The Israelites came out of that wilderness strengthened as God's people.

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It Wasn't Always Easy

The experience of the Wilderness for some included:

- Frustration, Dissatisfaction (Ex.15:24)
- Complaining (Ex.17:3)
- Uncertainty about the future (Num.14:1-4)
- Disillusionment with leaders (Ex.16:2)
- Desires to "go back" (Num.14:4)

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Following God

- At every turn in the Wilderness, God addressed the needs of his people. (Ex.15:25, 16:5, 17:6)
- **Following and trusting God** got them through the uncertainty of the Wilderness to the Promised Land.

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The Nature of Transition

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Layers of Transition

- Transitions can come in multiple layers
- More than one transition may be impacting a congregation (e.g., deaths, loss of members/pastor, etc.)
- Individual members may have their own transitions going on that come back to affect the congregational transition

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Important to Remember

God
Meets us
 in all Transitions
Walks with us, Guides us

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Group Sharing (optional)

- Tell about a time when a **“good transition”** happened in your life. What made it “good”?
- Tell about a time when a **“bad transition”** happened in your life. What made it “bad”?
- The challenge in congregations: Not everyone will be experiencing the transition in the same way.

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FB Synod Transition Manual

- During the transition period, a congregation can **reflect, renew, grow and learn** about itself.
- Rather than simply a time to put everything on hold or maintain the “status quo,” the transition time is an opportunity for the congregation and interim pastor **to do many things in preparation for the start of a new pastor’s ministry.**

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FB Synod Transition Manual

This is the Interim Goal:

- To prepare for the start of a new ministry
- By implication: To get ready to be interviewed by pastoral candidates

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FB Synod Transition Manual

- Are all things in good order and ready to be seen by candidates?
- Are we ready for what it means to be interviewed by candidates?
- Some preparations/changes may be needed.

“Reflect, Renew, Grow and Learn”

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Helpful for Leaders

- Know & Define yourself
- Expect to be challenged, but understand it for what it is: **a changing situation in the state of becoming**
- Stay in touch
- Keep your vision
- Stay on course

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Helpful for Leaders

Know the Boundaries

- Where we begin & end
- Where others begin & end
- Where our responsibilities begin & end

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Helpful for Leaders

- State and publish expectations
- The Difficulty: Not all things can be anticipated or expected
- Communicate as you are able and do it widely

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Remember

No matter what happens,
we will be **OK!**

*I am safe in my relationship with God
through faith in Christ Jesus*

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Ministry in Transition

Your thoughts
Comments
Questions

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