

Reflection on Transitions and Our Transition A Positive, Helpful, and Healthy Outlook/Approach

Concert of Prayer with Keith Chase
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Introduction

- Transition is a topic familiar to all of us.
- Life is made up of seasons, and the Harrisburg Brethren in Christ Church (HBIC) is ready as well to move into a new season.
- We should be challenged individually and corporately to think about transitions and how to constructively prepare for the exciting one that is upon us as a congregation.
- A good starting point for any of us is to recall the transitions in our lives and what they are like.

Transitions and Change

Transitions and change are indeed much a part of life.

- Which of these transitions have you experienced?
 - Job or career change
 - Marriage
 - Parenthood
 - Move
 - Retirement
 - New school
 - Many others – some difficult and trying, no doubt.
- What were some of the feelings or emotions during those times:
 - Stressful
 - Unsettling
 - Anxiety
 - Anticipation
 - Nervousness
 - Excitement – opportunity in change
 - Great expectations – or not so sure expectations
 - Uncertainty

Preparing for Transitions: Important Reflection Question

How can we prepare for and approach transition and change in ways that are healthy, constructive, and helpful? (This applies to our HBIC transition as a body and individually.)

Advice and Challenge

Commit ourselves to individually and corporately listening well, and commit to doing a few of the following suggestions in the coming year:

1. **Pray** – (two things about prayer—it works, and yet we often don't pray enough, or first)
2. **Prepare**—keeping our vision and mission much in view and taking steps to advance it
3. **Persist**—move forward, don't look back, don't compare
4. **Be patient**—transitions take time (yet we live in a “fast, impatient, and impulsive” age)
5. **Give the benefit of the doubt** – always! – Don't assume negatively. What you hear or perceive is often partial or simply not the case. Commit oneself to waiting and seeing.
6. **Be open and broad minded with a servant's heart** – Yield to leadership in a healthy way. Suspend your rights and preferences for a time. Our culture wires us to think first of individual rights and preferences. A good discipline is to think first about our responsibility to others.
7. **Communicate well** – Directly, constructively, and helpfully. Andy Stanley encourages asking the question, “How can I help?”, routinely. “How can I help?” is far superior to “How can I harm?” The latter sadly enough can occur far too easily and sometimes unintentionally – through carelessness and impulsiveness.

8. **Don't be a spectator** – get on the field (many sports fans are frustrated with their teams in part because as fans they are in the stands, and not on the field). The body of Christ is not a spectator sport.
9. **Don't turn molehills into mountains** – this happens so very easily and automatically. Recognize how easy it is and guard against it. Let's agree to a few non-negotiables and give some leeway on those things that are of lesser importance.

And now the most important items of advice, and from the best place for advice:

10. **Be United** – Ephesians 4:1-6

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Unity in the Body of Christ (is a resounding theme in Scripture) – John 17:20-22

²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—

Finally, be dead set against division in its various forms, including gossip – Titus 3:9-11

⁹ But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. ¹⁰ Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. ¹¹ You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned.

Closing: A Two-Part Proactive Application

- What is my part in making OUR transition wildly successful?
- Ask and answer these two questions, and make your own pact:
 1. What will I do?
 2. What won't I do?

...To God be the Glory!!!!