

Preparing for Leadership Transitions

In a team-based, pastor-led model of ministry, we are always equipping the saints for ministry. We are always developing leaders and creating space to empower these leaders. The multiplication of leaders inevitably means the multiplication of leadership transitions. So how do we prepare for this?

Here are some tips to consider:

COMMUNICATION AND PLANNING

“Strong communication can cover a multitude of succession sins,” concludes Kinnaman, “but a ‘make-it-up-as-we-go’ approach simply has less of a chance of going smoothly, and often fails to find time and intention for other steps that improve a transition, like including multiple types of input in the decision-making. If a governing body can plan ahead for a transition, the church is likely to come out ahead.” (Leadership Transitions: How Churches Navigate Personal Change and Stay Healthy, Barna <https://www.barna.com/research/pastoral-transitions/>).

- What needs to happen to plan for the leadership transition?
- Who needs to be involved in the planning?
- How much time is needed to prepare for the transition?
- What knowledge needs to be passed on?
- How will the transition be communicated to the church community?
- What can they expect from the transition?
- What needs to be communicated? When?

Be intentional and discerning about leadership transitions. Be transparent and communicate with your teams, leadership, and congregation. Plan in advance whenever possible. Communicate clearly with all involved, including the members of the congregation and neighborhood (as appropriate).

THE 4 Es



ENGAGE

Recognize & Recruit



EQUIP

Develop & Multiply



EMPOWER

Create Space & Commission



ENCOURAGE

Call Up & Affirm



GRACE COMMUNION
INTERNATIONAL



GRACECOMMUNION



WEAREGCI

CREATE SPACE AND COMMISSION

- Is the ministry leadership space for the incoming leader clear?
- Are there ministry descriptions in place for all involved?
- Have those transitioning into leadership been commissioned in front of the church community?
- Has their area of leadership been clearly communicated to the community?

MENTOR

Mentorship can play a key role in leadership transitions — before, during, and after.

How are leaders mentored in preparation for their transition into leadership?

How are they mentored through the transition?

How are they mentored once the transition is complete?

How do they begin to mentor others?

Refer to the art of mentoring series for more insights into mentoring and leadership transitions.

<https://resources.gci.org/mentoring> ➤

