



OVERVIEW OF TRANSITIONS

Do you think change is hard?

It is often said that every change includes some kind of loss, which is true for both positive and negative changes. In our current season, every church has experienced some kind of change, and that can be overwhelming.

We need to understand how transition works and how to manage it.

Missional Vitality's **Overview of Transitions** teaches us just that.

Using William Bridges's transition model, we describe the three phases of every transition: ending well, neutral zone, and new beginnings. This model helps during pastoral transitions, church building transitions, and pandemic and societal transitions.

Designed for your leadership team, it offers tools for navigating whatever transition you are experiencing in a healthy and meaningful way.

Format

Video (10-15 minutes) with handouts. A PowerPoint of the presentation is included for detailed discussion.

Audience

Leadership Teams, Councils, and Boards

Presented by Missional Vitality

www.covchurch.org/vitality

To access this video-based resource, contact your regional conference or vitality@covchurch.org for more information.



HEALTHY SYSTEMS IN THE CHURCH

The apostle Paul frequently refers to the church as the “body of Christ,” recognizing the many parts that make up the whole. We see an interplay within the body of Christ, much like the physical body; various systems work together to keep the body healthy and in balance in order to flourish and grow.

We know that every organism encounters struggle and impediments that threaten its health. How the system responds to preserve itself and adapt is key. The marks of health are visible in the integrity and maturity of these responses.

Healthy congregations are made up of individuals who are self-aware, appreciate difference, respond with curiosity and care, and are clear on the church’s values and purpose. In these lessons, we will explore how a systems understanding applies to our congregations, encourages greater maturity and health in our interactions with one another, and keeps us focused on mission.

Each of the five sessions builds upon the previous one, helping participants develop a systems lens for the relational dynamics at play within the congregation.

Topics include:

- Introduction to Systems
- Relational Systems
- Anxiety and Triangles
- Clear, Curious, and Connected
- Corporate Spiritual Practices

Each session is approximately 15–20 minutes in length and includes group discussion with the accompanying study guide.

The series is primarily designed for church leaders but can be equally helpful and accessible to all members. It can help provide shared language and understanding of how congregations respond in times of challenge and change.

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PROCESSING LOSS DURING TRANSITION



Guiding Scripture

“ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him.” (Philippians 3:7-9)

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all could have Paul's attitude about loss?

Acknowledging and processing loss and change is critical in a healthy transition process. All too often leaders implement new programs, change worship styles, and make changes in their buildings without giving the congregation the opportunity to acknowledge and grieve the losses they experience. This is especially true during pastoral transitions.

Processing Loss During Transitions consists of two video lessons to help leadership teams guide congregations through this process. Each lesson is 10-15 minutes and includes activities and handouts. We encourage you to include this very important step of acknowledging loss as you make a healthy transition.

Format

Video lesson, with handouts. PowerPoint included for in-depth discussion

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CONGREGATIONAL SNAPSHOT

Before the prophet Nehemiah started rebuilding the wall in Jerusalem, he took ample opportunity to examine its current state.

“ I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days I set out during the night with a few others. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on. By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire. Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King’s Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through; so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate. ”
(Nehemiah 2:11-15)

Nehemiah wisely assessed the scope of his project before beginning the work of rebuilding.

Do you know the true status of your church right now? By looking at your history, community composition and trends, congregational culture, statistics and trends, and examining your current congregational life and ministry, you can create a snapshot that informs any transitions you anticipate.

Designed for a leadership team or any team created to answer these questions, this booklet will produce an invaluable resource for both current and future leaders. We recommend that churches repeat this process at appropriate intervals and examine any trends you see.

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NAVIGATING CONFLICT DURING TIMES OF CHANGE



Guiding Scripture

“ When Eliab, David’s oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, “Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle.” (1 Samuel 17:28)

David understood conflict all too well. He had tension with his brothers. Many years of his life were spent battling with Saul and his armies. Yet David learned critical lessons in those years that helped him lead Israel as king. Seasons of conflict can lead to greater understanding and positive momentum if they are handled in healthy ways.

Is conflict occurring in your church? Change always involves some degree of loss. Sometimes change means a power shift is happening. Sometimes long-standing, buried issues emerge. It may be tempting to ignore the problem, but that can lead to even greater discord.

Conflict can actually be a time of opportunity. When healthy resolutions occur, needed change can take place.

This resource gives leadership teams tools to identify and resolve conflicts. With a video lesson, accompanied by a PowerPoint for deeper study, handouts on conflict, and a conflict strategy template, leaders can address the issues the church faces.

Format

20-minute video lesson plus PowerPoint, handouts, and template

Audience

Leadership Teams, Councils, and Boards

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If you are ready to work toward true peace in your congregation, contact your regional conference or vitality@covchurch.org for more information.