



Swift Transitions: Anticipating, Welcoming, and Celebrating the Moves of God

Succession Planning: Transition of Presence Session #8 – November 7, 2024

Ecclesiastes 3:2 teaches the certainty of one’s span of life; not that we will live for a defined number of years, but that we have a definite appointment with the end. An awareness of this certainty should encourage us to prepare for it as much as we can. Doing so indicates that one anticipates what is to come and empowers one to welcome the end with expectation. With adequate planning, one might even learn to celebrate victoriously because death will not have won—neither in this life nor for eternal life.

What is end-of-life planning?

End-of-life planning is the process of making decisions and preparing for the time of a person’s death—whether imminent or far off. It ensures that a person’s desires are communicated and respected and involves both practical and legal considerations. End-of-life planning may be considered a type of succession planning because it accounts for the eventuality of one’s departure. Given the need and nature of end-of-life planning, it might also require attention to emotional and spiritual matters.

Why is end-of-life planning important?

End-of-life planning signifies one’s acceptance that this transition (as with change itself) comes for everyone. Further, planning for the eventuality of our departure helps those we leave behind to come to terms with our transition. From a practical standpoint, planning relieves the burden of “trying to figure it out” after death has occurred, leaving more space to locate God. Here are a few other reasons why end-of-life planning is important:

1. Stewardship of God’s resources: Psalm 24:1; Matt 25:14-30; 1 Cor 4:2
2. Continuity of ministry: Matt 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:2; 4:2)
3. Leadership development: Nbrs 27:18-223; Deut 31:14-23
4. Empower future generations and encourage stability: 1 Cor 14:33; Ephesians 4:3

Question: How are these reflected in our way of attending to the mission and ministries of our church?

How can end-of-life planning benefit you and your loved ones?



2 Timothy 4:1-8

Planning for the end of your life

Note how Apostle Paul anticipated, welcomed, and celebrated the end of his life as this text shows us that sometimes transition means planning for the end of our own lives.

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Strategies for preparing for the end of life

To properly prepare for the end of life, it is important not to wait until the end to get your affairs in order. Paul's approach for preparation provides the following strategies that can help us transition well.

1. **Develop the context for your life's work.** Identify your purpose and work to that end.

2. **Disciple and encourage your successor(s).** Prepare those who follow you in the work.

3. **Reflect courageously.** Be gracious to you and let your good work inform the present.

4. **Reflect victoriously.** Identify the joy that awaits you in Christ Jesus.

NOTES: _____

God-honoring ways to view end-of-life planning

Paul offers an example of how one might approach the end of their life and be ready to be received by God. Following are a few additional examples who show us how to anticipate, welcome, and celebrate that God can be glorified even as we consider the end of one's life.

- Numbers 27:12-23 (cf. 22-23) _____
- Deuteronomy 33:1-29 _____
- Ruth 3:1-5; 4:9-12 _____
- Matthew 26:26-30 _____
- 1 and 2 Timothy _____