

MINISTRY DIRECTION DECISION MAKING PRINCIPLES

“PRINCIPLES OF PROVIDENCE
AND
SOME QUESTIONS FOR CLERGY”

An Introduction to this Resource

Following The Leader, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church is the desire of the heart for Christ Followers and especially those who 'make their living by the Gospel.' There comes those times and seasons where it is wise and necessary to reevaluate, reassess and refocus our place of ministry. This ReSource includes principles, questions and assignments that I have used in my own personal and professional journey of following the Leadership of the Lord.

This ReSource is 'suggestive ~ not exhaustive'. As you grapple honestly with your next steps and His direction, keep on seeking Him. It is the path of wisdom.

Dennis N. Baker

Myself (Gifts, Desires, Needs, Motives, Core Values)

Questions to Ask First of Yourself ~ Then Ask Your Spouse and a Trusted Wise Friend Who Knows You Very Well

- Do you find your skill, confidence and competence continuing to grow both technically and professionally?
- Have you worked through appropriate personal assessment tools, such as the PDP, DISC, Myers-Briggs, IDAK, Work-Style, Role Preference Inventory, Strength Finders and other general inventories to determine who you are and where you best fit?
- Do you have a retirement plan? Are you funding it?
- Who are your present mentors? How are they different from those mentors of ten years ago? Twenty years ago?
- How long has it been since you worked on your preaching/communication skills and style? Have you recently video taped a service and critiqued it? Have you listened to three of your sermons in a row? What do you hear?
- Do you have a prayer support team? What has been your practice for spiritual retreats or fasting and prayer to seek the will of God as Jesus did?
- Do you find it difficult to get up in the morning?
- How long has it been since you had a full physical including a full blood scan and a test of your blood sugar and hormone levels?
- Do you have a regular program of exercise and physical conditioning?
- How significant are your other personal friendships in the area where you live? Are these relationships nurturing or draining?
- Have you made a list of "what really matters" to you in this situation?
- Make a list of the things you do exceptionally well.
- Make a list of the things that you avoid at all costs.
- Who do you want to grow old with? Who is your team?
- Do you continue to have the right kind of energy for your present position?
- Are you a specialist or a generalist? What are your priorities? Do you have a workable, wise plan to carry them out?

- Is your spouse happy, content and productive? Are they protected and “safe” where they are? How is the relationship between you? Do you still “laugh together?” How is your sense of humor?
- For what are you truly responsible? What responsibilities are you assuming or taking that are not yours? How is this impacting your energy, stamina and your soul?

Questions to Ask God:

- Are you being fully human and yet walking in the power of the Spirit?
 - Is your spiritual life fresh and up to date? How is your soul?
 - What is the Call of God on your life and family?
 - Have you outlined goal oriented faith steps?
- Remember:** Abraham knew what he was about and stayed focused. Therefore, be like Abraham and keep on moving/risking/believing/faithing it with courage.

Principles to Ponder for Yourself:

- “Where the Lord Leads Principle”: Where the Lord will lead us is where our heart is broken/grieving and filled with a passionate desire to do something about it!
- Concern is a God-given thing.
- For us to function well, time away is a necessity and is therefore budgeted and provided for. This is necessary to re-focus and for midcourse correction.
- Do you sense the settled peace of God in your spirit?
- Are you trying to talk yourself into something?
- What patterns has the Lord used to “move you” in the past? Have you forgotten that God does the impossible?

My Present Situation

Questions to Ask Yourself:

- Have you worked through your “best case” ministry philosophy and plan of action with appropriate church leaders so that they own it and are walking with you?
- How much time have you spent setting a proper climate/atmosphere so that ownership in the ministry has developed?
- Have you thought through this potential decision to move from a biblical/theological and a logical/ethical point of view?
- How do finances fit into your present decision-making? How has God been supplying for you?
- Have you been involved in strategic evangelism and personal outreach ministry?

- How much work have you done in the area of “change” and what it takes to build vision? Are you out driving your headlights?
- Have you figured out the reasons why things are not working well enough and then seriously considered how you could make it and the plan work for you? Do you have a plan ~ a Ministry Map and Action Plan?
- Do you respect, trust and like to work with your colleagues? Do you work better because of them?
- Who are you presently discipling?

Questions to Ask Yourself and then Someone Else:

- How well have you ‘exegeted and decoded the culture’ in which you live and serve? Have you learned to do this so you could apply that knowledge to another location? What is the “ethos” of where you are?
- How well do you fit the total corporate structure, system, values and culture where you are?
 - Stylistically?
 - Theologically?
 - Practically?
 - Methodologically?
 - Relationally?
 - Spiritually?
 - Organizationally?
- Have you spent enough time developing and selling the vision where you are?
- Is that ‘vision’ rooted in your real core values?
- What is the purpose of your present leadership position?
- How much more personal and professional growth is needed in your present position before you could assume a larger responsibility?
- Are you able to locate the present address of “contentment?” Can you live with how it is where you are?

Other Questions to Ask The Lord:

- Can you stay where you are and continue to be a person of integrity?
- Who are you becoming? Are you generally happy/pleased about that ‘who’?
- Are you generally satisfied with your personal/spiritual journey?

- What changes do you need to make in maintaining spiritual freshness and vitality in your own soul?
- Do you need to “redefine or renew” your “sense of call?”
- Who is “The Lord of The Church?”

Questions to Ask Yourself:

- What kind of “culture” do you want to work with? To work against? What kind of opposition do you presently have? If you made a move, what would it look like there?

- What kind of headaches are you willing to live with? Do you want to live with?
- What intensity of professional pressure do you want to live with?
- If you move, have you formulated an appropriate game plan and strategy for your “first six to twelve months of the new start up”?
- Have you evaluated where loyalty fits in light of the investment made in you in the specific ministry you now serve?
- Are you fatigued? And is that fatigue a reaction to or result of other transitions in the ministry or in life?
- Do you do anything that is “nourishing” that is completely unrelated to ministry?

Questions to Peer Review with Someone Else:

- Is it “ethical” for you to leave at this time?
 - Time commitment?
 - Learning curve?
 - Wider use of gifts?
- What are the consequences of a move? What are the hardships of a move? What are the true realities of a move?

Questions to Ask Before The Lord:

- Have you considered these snares or traps?
 - Are you trying to please others?
 - Are you attempting to think through all responses and anticipate all of the consequences and outcomes?
 - Are you doing it for geographical reasons?
 - Are you doing it for cultural reasons?
 - Are you doing it for opportunity reasons?
 - Are you running before the job is done?
 - Are you avoiding working through floating issues?
 - Are you fearful instead of prayerful?
- Is what you’re thinking of doing worth building on?

Principles to Ponder for Your Future

- All of life is a risk-taking, faith-making venture and we are never fully content. We will not see the resources for what is ahead necessarily. You cannot predict the future with inerrancy.
- Before you move you need to know why you shouldn’t. They need to know why you shouldn’t before you candidate. This is “due diligence” homework and research.
- Don’t be particularly afraid of “professional suicide.”
- Howard Hendricks wisely observed, “It’s probably time to leave when your memories of the past exceed your vision for the future.” Where are you?

Seven Principles and Priorities

- Remember: Selecting between what is “good and bad” is often easier than selecting between “good and best”. Therefore, ask yourself these questions:
 - Since I cannot be everything, who must I be at this time?
 - Since I cannot do everything, what must I do, and do with excellence in harmony with my real core values?
 - Will this fulfill my vision and mission?
 - Is this the best time?
 - Is this the best way?
 - Is this the best sequence?
 - Will this make a difference for God’s Kingdom and a more preferable ministry future for the glory of God?
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Concluding Remarks

Working through this ReSource has taken time and is a ‘good start.’ I strongly recommend that you secure a copy of ***“Before You Move: A Guide To Making Pastoral Transitions In Ministry.”*** The author, Dr. John R. Cionca is a long term friend and colleague. We have ‘journeyed together’ in following the Lord.

DNB

UpDate: 8/09

