

Jethro's Transitional Ministry

Exodus 18

We all have a calling to some form of ministry, be it in clergy ways or otherwise. God gives us ministry gifts, which He then desires us to use in ministry among others for His glory. Last week I shared some of my story, and ministry experiences. Today, I wish to talk about what to expect from a **'Transitional Pastor'** in the next 18 months.

But first, I need to tell you a bit more about my sense of God's call on my life. My birth mother died when I was 5 weeks old. Before she died, she dedicated me to God's service. In ways that I am still learning, God has honored her powerful prayer as my life has unfolded, bringing me here today!

Let's look at Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, a High Priest in Midianite culture, a nomadic group of desert dwelling descendants of Abraham, who came to bring Zipporah and Moses' two sons, to visit with Moses and the Israelites as they camped near Mt. Sinai, just several months out of Egypt.

A. Jethro came to visit Moses and Israelites when they were 'in between' Egypt and Canaan v.5

-At the beginning of their 40 year pilgrimage in the wilderness/desert

-As the people were needing to learn how to be a self-regulating society, mostly uneducated, unskilled slaves, who only had ever experienced labor and oppression, needing to become functioning society

-They were facing changes which they had no idea about what to do, they didn't know how to trust God

-Experiencing the reality that massive change is coming, is not easy to accept! Do you like to change?
**Changes are coming for OGMC as well. When a well loved, long term pastor leaves a congregation, there is an inevitable, emotional transition, which follows. You all have built strong/meaningful ties with Pastor Dick, and it is impossible to instantly change, and incorporate a totally different pastor!!!

I learned this fact in my very painful experience at Souderton BIC Church, 1978-1981.

B. Jethro listened to the peoples' history and stories v.8-9

-This is the way we open relationships, is to listen to others, learn about them and their history, what has made them who they are. Listening to, and accepting others like this, is an important part of 'pastoral care'. It is the way we 'connect' with others, build mutually beneficial relationships.

**This is what I hope to do with you as well. I want to listen to your history/stories, learn your names, and pray with/for you. But this is going to be a challenging process, so I am asking for your help:

First, I would enjoy having current pictures of you and your family, with names and birthdays.

Secondly, you have in your mail boxes, a list of questions to focus your answers, please fill them in.

Third, beginning in February, I hope to begin 'listening', in your home, at church, phone, Skype, etc.

-At least half an hour, and in other settings, much longer! **I want to hear your stories!**

C. Jethro recommended changes, to get more people involved in the work, making it less stressful for Moses, and in the end, everyone was more satisfied v.23

-Whenever there is a pastoral change, it is a very good time for making systemic adjustments, and give more people opportunity to use their ministry gifts; everyone profits from this type of 'transition'!

**As an 'outside' person being able to see the OGMC system more objectively, I can ask some important questions, and maybe make some recommendations, to make things easier for a new pastor.

-When I was younger, at Souderton, we did not understand all these dynamics and realities like we do now, and I was a very insecure, emotionally unhealthy person, who did not even know it!

D. Jethro left, went back home, when his task was finished v.27

-Jethro did not do this for his own future or fame, but as an act of ministry to help God's people.

**My agreement is to travel with you all for the next year to year and half, and when finished with my task, welcome a new pastor, and encourage you all in the next part of your pilgrimage. Then go home!