

Principles from Biblical Instances of Succession in Leadership

Moses to Joshua

Preparation-Moses

- Learning to distribute leadership (Exodus 18:13-26)
- Recognition of limitations on his leadership (Numbers 27:12-14)
- Hearing the Lord's message that his service as leader was concluding (Numbers 27:12-14)

[Leader development, self-awareness, attentiveness to Lord's voice]

Preparation-Joshua

- Served as Moses' assistant (Joshua 1:1)
- Instructed by Moses (Joshua 1:7)
- Given assignments to fulfill (Numbers 13:8; 16-20)
- Went through difficult times with Moses when people rebelled; proved to be a man of faith and courage in the face of rebellious people, even under threat of personal harm (Numbers 14:1-14)
- Observed the way Moses led as he assisted him: intercession, worship, planning, construction, discernment, problem solving, opposition, miracles, administration
- Accompanied Moses to mountain to meet with God
 - To receive instructions for construction of tabernacle (Deuteronomy 24:13)
 - To receive revelation to teach the congregation (Exodus 32:17-18)
- Lingered in presence of God after being with Moses in the tent of meeting (Exodus 33:7-11)
- Distinguished himself, along with Caleb, as one who wholeheartedly followed the Lord (Numbers 32:12)

[Personal relationship; instruction, observation, practice, and responsibility in a wide range of leadership functions; personal demonstration of leadership under pressure; cultivate wholehearted devotion to God; given opportunity to distinguish oneself in qualifications]

Transfer

- Moses prayed for Lord to appoint the next leader with the welfare of the congregation (community) in his heart and mind (Numbers 27:15-17)
- Moses heard confirmation of person from the Lord (Numbers 27:18)
- Transfer to take place under the guidance of the priestly ministry (Numbers 27:19)
- Transfer to take place in public ceremony before the congregation (Numbers 27:19, 22-23)
- Moses named Joshua before the assembly (Deuteronomy 31:7)
- Orientation given to Joshua on how to discern direction for the community in conjunction with Eleazar of the priestly ministry (Numbers 27:21)
- Words of commissioning (Numbers 27:19, 23; Deuteronomy 3:7-8)
- Moses laid hands on Joshua to impart capacity (Numbers 27: 18, 23; Deuteronomy 34:8)
- Moses followed specific instructions from the Lord for the process

[Prayerfully discerned, publicly solemnized and celebrated with impartation of spiritual capacity]

Accommodation

- Congregation devotes time (30 days) to reflect upon and honor Moses leadership (Dt 34:9)
- Joshua receives own commission from the Lord (Joshua 1:1-9)
 - Builds on what Joshua received from Moses
 - Personalized to Joshua's season of leadership
- Joshua partnered with Eleazar, the priest, in receiving and implementing direction from the Lord (Numbers 32:28)

[Honor to former leadership, establish circle of advisors, receive fresh vision and administration]

David to Solomon

Preparation-David

- The Lord redirected David's vision to build a temple, indicating that he was to prepare the resources for his successor son to actually construct the temple (II Samuel 7; I Kings 5:1-5; I Chronicles 17)
- Did not prepare himself for succession, but held onto power until he was very weak and near death (I Kings 1:1-4)
- Family (children) not in order; David was losing respect for his leadership within his household; children taking matters into their own hands [Adonijah, Absalom] (I Kings 1:6)
- David unaware of plots to take leadership by seizing power; he needed to be alerted at the last minute by Nathan the prophet (I Kings 1:11-27)
- While it had been his intent to appoint Solomon as his successor, he had not made it known or set in motion a process to do so; Bathsheba appealed to David do so (I Kings 1:28-40)

[Cultivate succession plans as an ongoing aspect of good leadership well in advance of the need; cultivate self-awareness of effectiveness and fruitfulness of service; focus on long term results rather than short term power]

Preparation-Solomon

- Treated with favor from his father, David, and affirmed to his mother, Bathsheba, that Solomon would be king (I Kings 1:29-30)
- Just before his death, David gave words of instruction, a charge of responsibility, and directions as how to relate to David's former enemies (I Kings 2:1-9)

[Pre-identification with time for preparation and readiness of the people avoids attempts to fill in perceived gaps of leadership or lack of vision]

Transfer

- Done under pressure of rival take over attempt by sibling (I Kings 1:22-27)
- Done hastily to protect wife, Bathsheba, and son, Solomon from death (I Kings 1:21)
- Given king's mule to ride, serenaded with trumpet, declared king, pouring of oil to anoint for the task, and given words of blessing (I Kings 1:33-47)
- David's words were powerful in establishing Solomon in his role and on his throne (I Kings 1:35)

[Allow adequate time for ceremonies and meaningful transfer of authority and responsibility so the full scope of the constituency can participate and assimilate changes]

Accommodation

- Following his father's death, Solomon solidified his leadership on the throne (I Kings 2:12)
- Solomon exercised justice toward the enemies of his father and also those who had threatened his rise to the throne (I Kings 2:24, 46); he began to see his place on the throne as being established by the Lord.

[Planning succession process well lessens the need for the new administration to deal problems of the transition or unresolved issues from the previous administration]

Elijah to Elisha

Preparation – Elijah

- After a fruitful season of ministry and have expended his energy, he was refreshed by rest and supernatural provision of food for a 40 day journey to the mountain of God (I Kings 19:3-9)
- On the mountain, alone, God spoke to Elijah to give him perspective on the condition of His people and showed him whom to install in leadership positions—two kings and a replacement for himself as a prophet (I Kings 19:15-18)
- Elijah in exercising his ministry as a prophet was familiar with doing what the Lord spoke to him, having faith in the Lord's direction.

[Leader surveys the developments and needs in the sphere of influence; leader gets away to hear God's voice regarding succession and responds in faith to the Lord's designated choice]

Preparation – Elisha

- Elijah placed his mantle over Elisha as a symbolic act of calling him to follow (I Kings 19:19)
- Elisha was part of a prosperous farm operation [12 yoke of oxen!] (I Kings 19:19)
- Elisha learned to honor his parents; he learned to give priority to worship; he readily gave sacrificially to worship and his community (I Kings 19:20-21)
- Elisha made a clear cut with his vocation, offering himself freely to serve as an assistant to Elijah (I Kings 19:21)

- Observed Elijah's ministry and assisted him for a number of years

[Strong character qualities developed over time in current setting; ready to follow in a new sphere of responsibility; close association for a reasonable length of time]

Transfer

- Elisha bonded in loyal faithfulness to Elijah and knew Elijah's heart, purpose, and plan; he knew prophetically (the anointing that they shared) that Elijah's ministry service was coming to a close (2 Kings 2:1-6)
- Elijah invited Elisha to ask what Elijah could do for him before he was taken away; this was an indication of trust in his good judgment (2 Kings 2:9)
- Elisha requested inheritance of the double portion as Elijah's successor; he asked to be given the honor of being the elder son who was responsible to use one portion of inheritance to care for the well being of the parents while the other was the child's personal portion. In brief, Elisha was embracing the responsibility to carry on the ministry. (2 Kings 2:9)
- By active attention and engagement with Elijah, Elisha met the conditions of seeing what God was doing with Elijah and with humility acknowledging the loss of a father in faith and leadership (2 Kings 2:11-12)
- Elisha picked up the mantle (calling and capacity) to carry on the ministry and initially approached situations just as Elijah had done (2 Kings 2:13-14)
- The transfer of authority was evident to the discerning persons around him [other prophets] (2 Kings 2:15)

[Successor invested in responsibility, not passively receiving a gift of position or influence; public, symbolic, and actual spiritual impartation]

Accommodation

- Elisha performed supernatural acts, took his calling seriously, and served in the same geographical area as Elijah (2 Kings 2:25)
- Elisha was recognized by kings as the assistant who is now carrying on the anointing of Elijah (2 Kings 3:11)
- Elisha linked the release of prophet anointing with music as well (2 Kings 3:14-15)
- He fulfilled the double portion by using the portion designated for Elijah as well as his own to serve the needs of people, fellow prophets, kings, and the purposes of God in his generation; he was not subject to greed or materialism as illustrated by the account of Gehazi, his servant. (2 Kings 5:15-17)

[Honor for previous leader's approach and also creativity to revitalize and employ new applications of the anointing]