Successfully transitioning to a new Church - I recently transitioned from one church to another church and feel like the Lord gave me some great wisdom on how I (as a leader) could prepare well and set the transition up for success. This session would give practical advice and suggestions to pastors that are preparing for or walking through a transition.

\*\*\*Find out who is in the room. **What transitions are taking place right now?**

Personal Journey—12 Years of Student Ministry… Currently pastoring my 2nd (and hopefully FINAL) church.

**Englewood—FBC Cleveland**

1. **Only GO if God tells you to GO.**
   1. There are many reasons people leave churches (other than God’s call)
   2. Make sure you’re following God’s plan for your life—even if it means staying in a tough spot.
2. **Be as intentional with your exit as you are with your entrance.**
   1. People will remember the way you leave.
   2. It’s easy to sound like Jesus when you PREACH. It’s harder to look like Jesus when you LEAVE.
   3. Set the church & the next pastor up for success when you depart.

[Transition to new church]

**3. Start with a plan.**

* You’ve got to connect with the church… the deacons… the staff… the leaders… How are you going to do that once you arrive?

**You don’t become the Pastor by assignment. You become the Pastor by alignment.**  (By aligning yourself with the people)

* [John 10:27] Jesus said, “**My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me.”**
* Your sheep will never know your voice if you aren’t intentional in connecting with them.
* Connecting with people will also allow you to learn about the church.

\*\*\*[Part of my plan—**20 In-Home Gatherings called, “Prayer & Listening Sessions”**

* Explain host homes, desserts and coffee, setup.
* Four questions: **Who are you? What brought you to FBC? What KEPT you at FBC? What is one thing you are praying that God will do in our next season together?**
* I heard from them. I prayed with them. I’m now bonded with them forever.
* In 10 weeks, connected with over 400 leaders in homes across our city.

**How else can I connect with people?**

* Write more personal notes than you’ve ever written.
  + (Sickness, death, in hospital, birthdays, thank you cards, etc.)
* Utilize social media to your advantage in connecting with people.
* Be present when being present is appreciated (senior adult banquets, community gatherings, Operation Christmas Child packing party, etc.
* Send personal messages (videos) to your first time guests.

**Being the Pastor is a process, not just a position.**

Steve Gaines: “***At a minimum, it takes 5 years to become the Pastor of any church.”***

**How do I become the Pastor?**o **Love** (demonstrate your love for the people and the church)  
o **Consistency** (be consistent in your leadership)  
o **Wins** (The more wins you have, the more fans you’ll attract)  
o **Godliness in your leadership** (Be a model for your people)  
o **Longevity** (the longer you stay, the easier this gets)

**Plan your first 100 days:**

* **Relationships. Relationships. Relationships.**
  + **Deacons**
    - I see deacons as the front-lines of our ministry.
    - Define the role of deacon according to scripture and then equip them to be mobilized in ministry.
    - {visitation ministry}
    - {ministry to widows and homebound}
    - Serve ALONGSIDE them.
  + **Lay Leaders**
    - Know who your influencers are. You don’t want to find out the hard way.
    - Legacy members. Sunday-School Teachers.
    - In-home gatherings
    - Lunch/coffee meetings
    - “*Walk slowly through the crowd”*… at church, at the grocery store, at the bank, etc.
  + **Staff Team**
    - Getting a Little Personal document (20 Questions)
      * Create a Staff BIO Book (including a personality profile—DISC, as well as a spiritual gifts assessment)
      * \*\*\*sent before I arrived on the scene. That way I had time to study and learn who these people were.
      * \*\*\*include picture, family info, likes & dislikes, etc.
    - Retreat together. Get everyone on the same page as quickly as possible. Take time to connect on a personal level.
    - Elijah’s harbor—don’t overprogram. Have a good balance between: Meeting & Playing & Praying.
* **Assess your resources.**
  + Building and Grounds, website, social media presence,   
    stationary, logo, marketing strategy in your town, growth-track for making disciples, follow-up process, church database software… evaluate everything and take good notes.
  + Don’t come in and start changing everything right away. Just take good notes and then begin to create a list, prioritizing the things you know you need to address in the future.
* **Look for easy wins.**
  + Don’t remove the organ from the sanctuary on week #1.
  + For me, big wins included…
    - Standing in the Commons and shaking hands before and after service.
    - Asking our worship ministry to include a couple hymns at our 8:15am service.
    - Walking around Wednesday dinner and talking to people.
    - Hosting luncheons for community leaders and groups of people.
    - Weekly salvations/baptisms (not in my control, but I believe God honors our faithfulness on preaching the gospel)
    - Implement a more thorough follow-up process, freshen up   
      guest services and parking lot ministry, go with youth pastor to   
      schools, deliver teacher appreciation gifts, attend men’s prayer   
      breakfast, pop in on Sunday School classes or small groups   
      unexpectedly, take staff on a FUN retreat, find a way to bless   
      the staff and reward them for their efforts during the interim.
    - For those of you who have transitioned to a new church… What are some of the easy wins you had?
* **Clarify structure & systems that are in place.**
  + Get to know your policies and procedures, read over the   
    church bylaws and then read them again and again, learn the   
    ORG-Chart and know who reports to whom.
  + How are decisions made at your new church?
  + How is church business conducted?
  + What’s the hiring process?
  + What is the process of making large purchases?
* **Set obtainable goals for staff & celebrate victories in a BIG way.**
  + If you were to set some goals for your staff, what would they be?
  + How have you rewarded your teams for a ‘job-well-done’ in the past?
    - Christmas party—everybody left with a bonus and a gift (that was donated by local business leaders).
* **Preach the Word.**
  + God never called us to build the church. Jesus said He will build His church. Don’t preach in order to build or grow. Preach in order to be faithful to God’s calling on your life.
  + There is no substitute for preaching God’s word.