

Transition Message to ECF 9/22/19

Ok friends, it's time for some family business. I want to share some things from my heart as we enter the last part of our service and share in a time of communion.

During my Sabbatical, two years ago, I read a compelling book called Next – Pastoral Succession that Works. Unbeknownst to me at the time, the book helped me unpack some of the things I had been thinking about as I thought about the long-term health of ECF.

The book shared studies on churches that had gone through healthy and unhealthy leadership transitions. It was clear that churches can thrive when major transitions are made if those churches are in a healthy spot and if those major transitions are planned and executed with intentionality. A main point in the book is that every, pastor is in transition from day one.

With that in mind, I studied and researched how transitions work best and I realized that Suzette and I, as well as ECF, are in a healthy place to begin planning a transition to the next lead pastor and, done well, it could be one of the most exciting and healthy things for this church.

Before I go any further, I do want to make a couple things clear. Although our intention is to pass the baton of leadership at some point in the not too far future, we have no plans nor intentions of leaving this great church that we have put our heart and soul into for the last 18 years. While Suzette and I have asked the elders to begin helping us plan this transition, this is not an immediate thing. Our intention is for this to truly be a well thought out and planned transition. That means there needs to be planning, time and much prayer to see that it is what God desires for this church.

So, let me give you some backstory and context:

For the last 5 years my dear friend John Adair has asked me a couple times a year, so, what's next for you Dave? Seriously, he's asked me repeatedly "what do you see yourself doing in 3, 5, 10 years?" After Sabbatical and reading that book, I felt compelled to actually begin walking through that scenario. I asked John to read the book and then asked Todd Jensen and Tim Minton to read it.

Suzette and I sat down with the three of them and they just let us process our hearts and minds for several hours. It was a great conversation. I also sought Godly wisdom and insight from some trusted friends and pastors outside the ECF family.

One of my greatest passions is serving the church and one of my dreams is to simply have the opportunity to serve without the weight and responsibility of always leading the charge.

Why now you might be asking? For the last couple years, I have been absolutely too busy. As you know, I have always been bi-vocational, and, most of you also know that my business has required much more of me, in the way of time, energy and travel, especially during the last 2 years. I have always done my best to be faithful with both callings and serve the Lord to the best of my ability wherever he calls.

During this last season, I have felt the Lord calling me in different directions to use my gifts in the Kingdom. As I near the age of 60, I want to make sure I have the energy and time to

focus on fewer yet equally significant areas where my gifts and abilities can be used most favorably.

I want to be clear. I am not burned out and going through a season of depression, Suzette will vouch for that, but I AM weary and need some margin or extra time for family and our aging parents. Everyone needs some margin in their lives in order to thrive instead of just survive! I honestly believe I will better serve the Lord and this church if I am able to be in an unpaid support role, just like most of you. Rest assured, I am filled with faith and believe more than ever that Jesus is on the throne and that He's got this.

So, the looming question with many will be...so, is this a nice way of saying you are leaving ECF? The answer is no. That is not our intention and in fact, my vision would be to stick around ECF in an unpaid position, continue to serve on the eldership if appropriate, help influence and lead our leaders, mentor our younger guys, give direction and even remain on the teaching team at some level but hand off the role of leading the day to day charge to someone younger, with more energy and time to invest in leading. That is my dream, however, Suzette and I are willing to submit to whatever the elders think is best for a healthy transition for the church as a whole.

The elders have developed a plan to get the process of transition started. Though it may be a year or longer to fully transition, we plan to begin the process on Oct. 1st. The options are wide open. We are all on board with trusting the Lord in this process and excited to see the plan revealed. A couple of the elders will explain more of this in a few moments.

Suzette and I are grateful for the love and support of the Elders, for us and for the church. That love is fueling their energy to pray and plan for a healthy transition that is exciting for all of us! Change is one of the only things guaranteed in life. It's inevitable. We are thrilled that ECF is in a good place as we enter this time of transition. With Him leading the way, we fully expect to remain the vibrant, healthy and positive community that we are.

God has given us a rare gift or opportunity that many churches do not have the pleasure of enjoying. The opportunity to write the script for the next chapter, or season, of ECF history. Most churches end up in transition due to unhealthy situations where there has been angst and disunity or division. For 18 years we have worked for, and been blessed with unity, trust and peace. With our strong community, and continued faith, we trust that God will deliver exactly what ECF needs to continue to serve and spread His love on the Eastside.

The plan is to engage you, the mature body of believers, in the process of this transition, with the elders leading the charge. We have a very capable and amazing staff, an incredible teaching team, energetic elders, and generous members who will all be supporting the process and continuing to fulfill their duties faithfully so that this church continues to operate without missing a beat.

I am personally excited to see what's NEXT for this Church and I hope you will join me and Suzette in praying with great expectations of what is NEXT. I assure you; we are both filled with faith and believe more than ever that Jesus is on the throne and that He's got this! I hope you will join us. We love you, want to stand alongside you and look forward to this next season in community with you.