

## New Year, New Job

A friend who lives and works in another state recently asked me for vocational advice. He is in full-time ministry and is happy and loves the people with which he works. However, a new potential position has come on the radar that has all of these attributes plus greater long-term potential. Our conversation revealed five vocational principals and questions to ask if you are wondering if you should look at new position.

**1. Ministry is ultimately about kingdom impact.** *How is your current position leveraging and developing your capacity to impact Christ's kingdom?* Having a clear picture of your ministry fruit and how God is using your position to develop your ministry capacity is essential in more ways than one. Not only does such a picture help us to hone our ministry strategy and development, it also helps us to see with greater clarity the future for which God is preparing us. Consider the realistic ministry outcomes of your position and compare those with what else you could potentially be doing. *In what ways does each further the kingdom? In what ways does each develop you as a Christ follower? Which of these is preferable from God's perspective?*

**2. Every position has a corporate AND a personal life-cycle.** *Where are you in the life-cycle of your position?* Position life-cycle can be difficult to discuss because it feels impersonal. This can be true for any organization and individual, but even more so in churches because of the highly relational nature of ministry. It also requires a high degree of clarity in regard to goals and expectations of a position and the skills and life-stage of a person who is going to fulfill the position. National averages can give you a good starting place, but make sure you know how long the previous three predecessors lasted in your position. Similarly, be aware of what your work history says about you. If you want to significantly extend the life-cycle of your position or personal history, be prepared reinvent yourself and/or your position when the time comes.

**3. The church, ministry team, and/or position isn't designed to meet all of our needs.** Many of us have unmet emotional needs we hope ministry can fill. However, ministry isn't about meeting every need we might throw its way. It will fail us if we expect our church to be a perfect community, our boss to be a selfless mentor, or for our position to transform us into the ideal minister. Each can happen in measure, but we must beware of our expectations and learn from them about ourselves. Our disappointments reveal as much (if not more) about our own growth areas than they do anything else. *What do your disappointments suggest about the ways in which you need to grow and rely more closely upon the Holy Spirit?*

**4. Trust and alignment with the church's vision is necessary.** *Are you fully aligned with the church's vision and does your ministry further it?* Alignment and trust alone won't assure success, but they are necessary to it. Our vocational vision might not be exactly the same as your the church's vision, but make sure its either parallel or submissive to it. If not, consider if you are on the "right bus." A deeper expression of the alignment issue is the trust factor. If trust has been broken on either side for any reason, work to repair it. Broken trust sabotages alignment even where vision is shared. Further, the coping mechanisms and work habits that develop in trust-deprived environments become liabilities down the road. Where

this is the case, it's probably time to start new.

**5. The timing of your departure should have little to do with your current position.** (This assumes, of course, that you are in control of your departure). I realize this goes contrary to the relational nature of ministry, but generally speaking, don't discuss a potential opportunity with your supervisor. We all want to think we are all "mature enough" for this conversation, but it's not a matter of maturity. Not only could such a conversation be interpreted as an attempt to obtain a promotion or a raise, it also places your supervisor in a difficult position of thinking separately about what is best for you and what is best for the ministry. When you have come to a decision to make a transition, the timing of a resignation (and how much notice you give) should be dictated by what is best for you and your new position. Part of accepting a new position is letting go of the responsibilities of the old; trust them to "fill the gap." Give yourself as much transition time as you can afford. Ask yourself, "*how much time do I need to "hit the ground running?"*"

Read more from Mike [here](#).