

Succession Is: A Shift in Stewardship

The farmer's day-to-day activities look different from season to season. Sure, some things are the same, but his changing priorities have a significant impact on how he manages his time from season to season. The activities required to plant a field are very different than the things required to harvest it. The various activities that demonstrate a farmer's stewardship in one season are different than the activities that demonstrate his stewardship in the next.

This is easy to understand, right? Let me ask you a question. Would you consider the farmer to be a good steward if he plowed his field during a time of harvest? Of course not. Why?

Plowing the field is what you do to prepare the soil for seed. Plowing at harvest would destroy the crop. This isn't stewardship, it's stupidity.

Here's the point. **A commitment to stewardship implies a willingness to allow the change in season to result in a change in activity.**

To illustrate further, let's take a look at how the Bible exposes us to two distinct aspects of time. *Kronos* is measured time. This is where we derive our modern word "chronology." The Bible expresses *Kronos* with references to hours, days, months, years, etc... *Kairos*, on the other hand, is seasonal time. Unlike *Kronos*, *Kairos* is not constrained to specific measurements. Here is an example.

For David, after he had served the purpose of God **in his own generation**, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers...Acts 13:36, ESV

The "in his own generation" is a reference to the *kairos* in which God placed David in history.

One of my frustrations with the capital campaign industry in the church space over the past 30 years is that it has fostered a teaching of stewardship that predominately followed the categories of time, talent and treasure. These are all *Kronos* expressions. What has developed is a limited sensitivity and discernment for what stewardship actually is and how stewarding one's *kairos* impacts their life. To illustrate my point, ask someone at church to illustrate the topic of stewardship with a picture. I'm willing to bet 80% would draw a dollar sign or some other representation of currency.

What does this have to do with succession planning?

Everything!

The Church in America is experiencing a seismic shift in leadership. Pastors, by the thousands, are aging into a new season of influence. They are about to enter their retirement years. As with the farmer, the leaders that do not adjust their activity (*Kronos*) to the reality of their changing season (*Kairos*) will no longer demonstrate good stewardship. Indeed, succession planning is one of the biggest stewardship challenges the Church in America will face over the

next 5-7 years.

In the same way the capital campaign industry helped foster a narrow perspective on stewardship, the search industry is fostering a narrow perspective on leadership transitions. As I wrote in the [first post](#) of this series, succession planning and replacement planning are not the same thing. Trying to navigate a planned leadership transition through the lens of replacement planning is like using a dollar symbol to define stewardship. Yes, it is part of the conversation, but there is so much more to discuss and account for.

We are at a time where pastors need to be like the men of Issachar; men who understand of their times and know what they ought to do. ([1 Chronicles 12:32](#))

Or, to say it another way, we need pastors who are willing to allow the reality of their changing kairos to determine their kronos. We need pastors to shift their stewardship.

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