

Changes and Challenges

Is there ever a good time to make significant changes in the church's ministries? It is clear that changes are disruptive to our normal activities and causes stress in the lives of those involved. There are risks to members and the congregation when changes occur. This is a negative perspective on changing the status quo. Other questions to be considered: Is the change scriptural and necessary? Is the potential good from the change worth the attendant risk? Will the results be truly beneficial in the long term?

When faced with changes in our church and family lives, are there guidelines and examples that will carry us through? For many of the biblical characters, change and challenges were the norm. Joshua, Moses, and the prophets of the Old Testament (to name a few), as well as Jesus and the apostles from the New Testament, successfully faced numerous changes in their lives.

Joshua's life was filled with constant change and challenges. Joshua made the often quoted statement, *But as for me and my house we will serve the Lord* (Joshua 24:15b). That statement was made near the end of his life on earth, but it was the way he lived his life. Joshua lived life with a purpose. Daniel, in his early life, purposed in his heart, that he would not defile himself while in Babylonian captivity (Daniel 1:8). Jesus, at the age of about 12 years, declared He must be about His Father's business (Luke 2:49). The apostle Paul simply declared what his life was about when he said, *I live by faith in the Son of God* (Gal. 2:20 b).

Is there a common element in the lives of these men, and other biblical characters, that sustained them through their trials? I'm convinced the common thread in the lives of these men which allowed them to get through times of change and challenges is they, at some point in their lives, made the foundational decision to be faithful to God. Then many, if not most, of life's choices will already have been made as they transitioned through the changes and challenges. They simply lived their lives with purpose, and if we make the same foundational decision, we can also successfully handle the changes and challenges we will face.

For the elders,
Don Denton