

MANAGING CHANGE

Change is continuous!

Change is now called Transition!

Change is to have a vision!

Change is all around us

With change it means we don't always get what we expect or want!

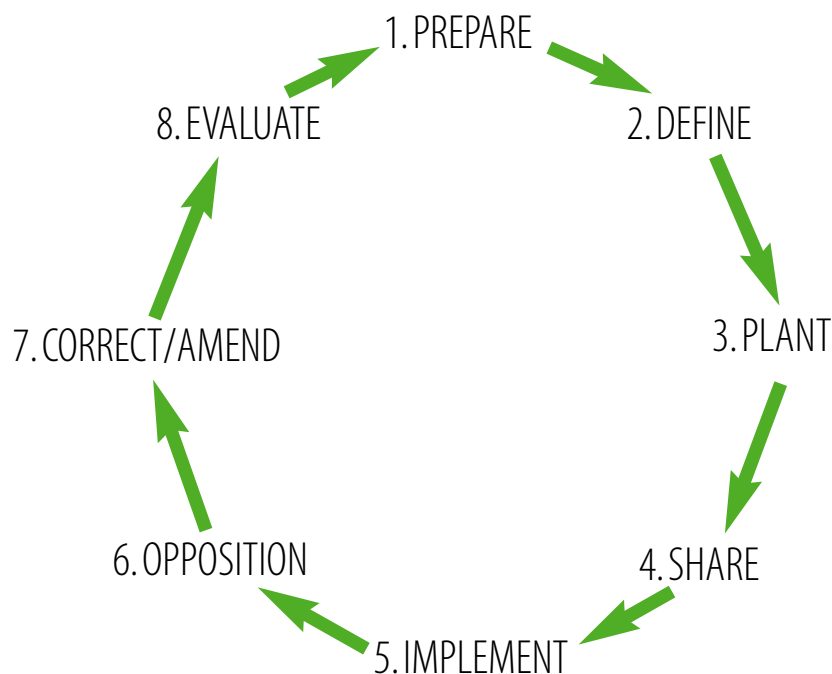
Psalm 32 v 8 and Psalm 16 v 7,8

If you are considering change or transition then you need to involve the people that it will affect and there are a number of stages you will need to go through.

To miss these out or short cut them can lead to upsets and unhappy people.

Give the process the correct amount of time, rushing it is as bad as missing out some of the stages.

CHANGE/TRANSITION/VISION CYCLE



Don Sutherland describes vision as *"Vision is a process not a product, vision is a journey not a destination."*

STAGE ONE - Prepare

As long as you are content with the status quo you will never have God's vision.

Change in your church has to be God driven so you need to get that vision and the main tool for that is prayer.

Spend time seeking God's will, this may include a time of fasting, again there is no time limit on this.

1 Corinthians 2 v 9, Proverbs 19 v 21, 2 Corinthians 5 v 17

Gather the information:-

What do you want to achieve?

Who do you want to reach?

Perhaps write a vision statement to include the above

"We never did it that way before and are not going to now"

Do not rush your preparation!

As part of your preparation go to those who are doing it, not those who know the theory and are not putting it in to practise.

STAGE TWO – Define

What – purpose

Who – target

Why – strategy

Matthew 16 v 18

Change/Transition is like a big jigsaw puzzle, you put it together one piece at a time.

The What

Ask your members:- What is our purpose here at _____ church?

The Who

They should be who God wants us to reach not who we want to reach.

Strategy should always come last.

You cannot decide how you are going to do it until you have identified the what and who.

You need to ask the question who runs your church?

The first two stages are normally done by the leadership team but this will depend on the structure of your church and size or it may be done by the Pastor only (but this is not advisable).

If forming a team to work the vision through this needs to be a minimum of 3 and maximum of 7.

STAGE THREE – Planting

This is where you open up your vision to the membership and other leaders.

A seed will not grow until it is planted

At this stage you will start to see opposition and doubts and the people who are expressing them can be treated in 3 ways:-

Win them over

Fight them

Remove them

The first is the best option but it will take time.

You need to have a core group of people who also “dream the dream” and this is for Balance, feedback, fellowship, and accountability.

Do not go it alone thinking that it is easier to get forgiveness than permission.

Going it alone will cause:-
Confusion
Entrenchment
Departure
Hurt

Perhaps bring in someone to talk to the people who have or are going through a period of transition and change.

1 Thessalonians 1 v 6,7,8

STAGE FOUR – Sharing

Again stages 3 and 4 can be combined depending on your situation.

Sharing must be done in the right order.

Keep sharing the vision until people catch it and own it, you will never get 100%

You may find people will leave the fellowship at this time.

How do you share the vision?

Preach it	Small Groups	Issue a statement
Use catchy phrases		Bible verses
Stories and testimonies		Conference/away days
Books and tapes	One to one	Live it out

STAGE FIVE – Implement

James 1 v 5

Don't move too quickly at this stage.

Focus on one change at a time

Implement things in order.

Ensure your leaders are taking up prime positions so that others can see their commitment

STAGE SIX – Opposition

1. Expect it
BUT
2. Keep on track

You will get it and how you handle it can make or break the vision.

Opposition will come in the form of:-

- Apathy –
- Anger –
- Ridicule
- Criticism –
- Fight –

Often the reason for the opposition is not what you would expect so you will need to give time to people to fully understand their misgivings.

During implementation you will need to:-

- Pray regularly
- Not stop working
- Encourage each other
- Keep on leading
- Keep watch (sheep in wolves clothing)

Also if people are going to leave the church now is the time it will happen!

STAGE SEVEN - Correct and amend

As you make changes to your original plan, learn from the experience.

What you will need at this time is wisdom and maturity – James 1 v 5

How will you respond to the comments made on the plan?

Will you respond or bury your head in the sand?

People will raise questions and come forward with alternatives and ideas.

Will you ignore?

Will you discuss and review their input and if possible make those changes that improve.

Obviously it is impossible to include everything and at some point someone has to make the decision to move on.

“Peace has to reign”

To make adjustments is not a sign of weakness, it does not have to mean they’ve won and you have lost.

Keep reminding people why the need for change.

Keep affirming and show appreciation for the changes they are making.

Ownership is important.

STAGE EIGHT – Evaluate

You are looking at what has taken place and considering what it was like and what it is now like and the stages you went through.

If the vision, the change, the transition has been accepted you will have and see the following:

- Completion
- An effect on people
- Criticism and opposition
- New leaders, if you start to build God's vision he will provide the tools
- Contribution – various ways small and large
- Financial benefit
- Renewed commitment
- New people join, a church with vision will attract
- Openness to further change

CONCLUSION

Change/Vision/Transition is:

Doing the right thing, In the right way, For the right motive, At the right time!

One of the biggest failures of change or transition is trying to do it too fast!

Churches considering and wanting change often take out “God” and insert “we” and “I”