

Natural Transitions

Submitted by Elder Anthony Brown

Ecclesiastes 3:1

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens ...”

“Everything has a season.” Sound familiar? It’s an often-heard mantra as we navigate life’s changes and transitions and, in many instances, try to make sense of “what was, that’s no longer, what is.” As much as we hear and must come to understand that everything must change, it can be difficult to handle what I’ve begun calling some of life’s “natural transitions.” King Solomon’s writing in this Chapter of Ecclesiastes walks us through an array of these transitions – life to death, hurt to healing, mourning to dancing, and war to peace. Solomon’s constant quest for insight and wisdom park us at the door of change, transition, and many of life’s sobering realities.

Perhaps you’re reading this devotion and Solomon’s words are painting your reality. Things are, or are becoming, different. Change is all around you. Perhaps it’s the death of a loved one, a job crisis, or a serious illness. Perhaps you are aging and what was once simple is becoming more difficult. Or maybe you’re young and the sound of wedding bells have been replaced by the sound of communication and compromise. The songwriter declared “life is filled with swift transitions,” and I want to suggest in line with King Solomon that one of life’s greatest challenges is dealing with “natural transitions.” Several of my younger friends have welcomed children into their lives and things will never be the same – it’s called a “natural transition.” And let’s be honest, these transitions can be tough. We are great at giving advice to persons we see going through transitions but always remember your day will come and a “natural transition” will push you to trust in God who, through the writer declared, “there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.”

So, here’s some suggestions for handling life’s natural transitions. First, stay close to God. Of course, this is something we should be doing anyway but the reality is we stray. But during seasons of change and transition we must stay close to God. The fact is it can be so difficult to understand the transitions and God will provide that listening ear, that nonjudgmental shoulder to lean on, that “same yesterday, today, and tomorrow,” presence in your life. Secondly, talk about what you’re going through. Of course, you can’t talk to everyone, but God will lead you to persons who will listen, cry, and lament with you. And yes, I did say cry and lament with you, because often you don’t want someone to give you the answer – you just want to be heard. And let me add that this “person to talk to” could be in the form of a professional counselor or therapist. As the saying goes, sometimes you need “Jesus and a therapist.”

And finally, as you handle life’s natural transitions, you must believe that the pain, frustration, uncertainty, and confusion of “natural transitions” will pass. That’s what the King said in his writing – The Lord will “turn your mourning into dancing.” And that’s what a trusted friend said to me recently when the world stood in shock at the death (by suicide) of Stephen “tWitch” Boss, known for his work as the DJ on "The Ellen DeGeneres Show." “If,” she said, “he would have only realized that whatever he was going through would pass.”

I am praying for all of US this morning as we learn to handle life's "natural transitions" – Stay close to God, talk about what you're experiencing and, look forward to God turning your mourning into dancing.