

## Pastoral Retirement: Finishing Strong, Continuing Well

### Lesson Plan

Marlin Ebersole

**Lesson Purpose:** To tool pastors and churches for retirement transitions

**Lesson Overview:** This lesson explores reasons pastoral retirement is sometimes a challenge and principles to follow so that retirement can be a blessing for both the retiree and the church.

**Opening:** We often prepare well for major life transitions. Churches provide pre- marriage counseling and classes for new parents. Churches often smooth the way for young people making educational choices, and grief groups help people cope with death. But often we are quite silent on the important transition of pastoral retirement. Talking about pastoral retirement can help demystify and bring health to this process.

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 8:23 – 26

**Mini Lecture:** Watch the video: *Pastoral Retirement: Finishing Strong, Continuing Well*

#### Exercise 1: Talking Back

Read the following quotations. Choose one quotation for which you will make a comment. Share the quotation and your comment with the group:

- *The greatest hindrance to the ongoing success of any organization is the charismatic leader who founded it.* James Collins
- *. . . they must retire from their regular service and work no longer. They may assist their brothers in performing their duties at the tent of meeting, but they themselves must not do the work.* Moses, in Numbers
- *Appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.* Paul, writing to Titus
- *Choose who will carry on your legacy. A legacy lives on in people, not things.* John Maxwell

#### Exercise 2: Finishing Well

Clinton's research on leaders in the Bible shows that only 30% finished well. Paul, writing to Timothy says, "I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize." On your paper, write a short description of how you would like to finish well. Share your description with the group.

**Exercise 3: It's Mine!**

Ebersole says in his lecture that you will be tempted to feel ownership of the congregation. In which particular areas of the church have you invested the most and may be tempted to feel the most ownership? On a paper, complete the following sentences:

- An area of the church in which I have heavily invested is \_\_\_\_\_.
- I care about this area because \_\_\_\_\_.
- I would have a hard time letting go of this area if \_\_\_\_\_.
- A strategy I could use to gracefully let go of this area is \_\_\_\_\_.

Share your answers with the group.

**Exercise 4: Looking Out**

Ebersole recommends developing ministries and interests outside the church before retirement so that you will have outlets during retirement. Complete the following chart to share with the group.

Current Ministries I Have Outside the Church	Current Interests I Have Outside the Church	Possible New Ministries I Could Develop Outside the Church	Possible New Interests I Could Develop Outside the Church

**Exercise 5: Stepping Out**

Ebersole says, "It may be best for the retiring pastor to leave for a period of time . . . When Jesus taught about the coming of the Holy Spirit, he told his disciples he was going to leave them, saying, " . . . I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. (John 16:7)

How do you respond to this? Discuss your views with the group.