

## Families and Transition

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Transition. A time of in-between. It is often a waiting period or a time of diligently searching for the next season of life. When families or individuals are in transition, they can feel uprooted and fragmented which can lead to depression, worry and anxiety. There is a sense of "I can't wait to get this over with until I'm settled again" thought system, and with it a longing to be anchored.

The Lord has allowed many transitions for my family. He has also brought us face-to-face with others; clients, friends, congregations, and strangers who are "in-between". This summer, after checking into a tiny motel in upper Minnesota, the owners' two young daughters stood outside our door. The girls and their parents had been in town for only a week. The card on the flowers in the lobby said, "Good luck on your new business venture, Love, Grandpa." It was clearly a time of transition. The oldest girl studied me for a moment and then asked, "Do you have any kids that we can play with?" I inquired back; "How old are you?" "I'm ten and my sister is eight, and we don't know anybody here yet." They glanced past me into our room to survey our own daughters, ages 22, 18, and 14. Kind of a dead-end for playmates. The youngest girl, recovering from disappointment more quickly than her sister, asked "Wanna see what we made this morning?" Behind them on the ground laid a grey garden stepping stone. The girl knelt beside it and proudly placed her delicate hands around it. Randomly super-glued to the surface of the stone, plastic colored jewels decorated the center. Here, in the strange new town, two sisters had collaborated on a playtime craft project.

The garden stone was heavy and steady, with a sense of permanence about it. The plastic jewels, though looking a bit out of place, were firmly and deliberately secured. Two young girls, a strange new town, and odd little fastened jewels on a steady garden stone. When we are "in-between" the Bible tells us that the steadiest place is with Jesus Himself; "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation" (Isaiah 28:16).

In a transitional stage of life, we may feel odd, lonely, or rejected. Jesus was no stranger to transition and no stranger to these feelings. In the garden of Gethsemane, the few hours between Jesus' life and His crucifixion, even His closest friends fell asleep. But Jesus deliberately clung to God the Father, praying "Thy will be done." In the end, Jesus, "the stone which the builders rejected, became the chief cornerstone" (1 Peter 2:7). Jesus is the steady rock, the garden stone that gives us sure-footing. In a time of "passing through" who are we? The odd little superglued jewels, of course. Not plastic, but beautiful and precious. Fastened securely to the Chief Cornerstone we can "come to Him

as a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious" (I Peter 2:4).

Perhaps transition would be less traumatic if viewed with more permanence and steadiness. It is a stage to pass through, but is it also a stage to deliberately belong in? The Minnesota girls showed the "passing through" stage in their wandering mannerisms and their searching for playmates. But they also symbolically portrayed a way of survival in this new season. They worked together to create a masterpiece, unknowingly portraying stability, permanence and beauty. Fastened to Jesus, allow Him to lead you, in the midst of transition, to a new understanding of transition.

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