

Tidbits

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Finding Our Way in Transition

As I sat on an airplane headed back to the US after three years in Central Asia, I stared out the window, praying and wondering what was ahead. The words from Jeremiah 29:11 then clearly came to mind:

“I know the plans I have in mind for you,” declares the LORD, “they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope.”

That passage has been a comfort so many times when I did not know what was ahead, yet found hope in God’s plan. I find it interesting that this verse was part of a letter written to Israelites when they were in Babylon, far away from their home land, encouraging them to settle down where they were. They had been through major transitions and lived as foreigners, yet even when out of place they had at least one constant in their lives: God in his Sovereignty and faithfulness.

All of us face transitions on a regular basis, whether we are the ones moving to a new place or someone we are close to is about to depart. Just like the Israelites, we are asked to let go of what was left behind and embrace what is around us. That doesn’t mean complete detachment; the Israelites received letters and maintained their cultural heritage. Nor does it mean it will always be easy; God knew they needed that encouraging word and included a promise: “When you call me and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. When you search for me, yes, search for me with all your heart, you will find me” (vs. 12-13). It is very easy to get caught up in all the stressors surrounding us, but we are reminded that we need to take time to spend with God.

A second important part of dealing with transitions is finding support from others around us. For families, this includes time spent with children, allowing them to express their thoughts and feelings, and time as a couple to offer mutual support and encouragement. Healthy family relationships are critical when facing

changes, which include both feelings of loss and uncertainty in a new environment. Singles often need to be proactive in finding the support and encouragement they need, making the building of friendships very valuable in a new setting. Reaching out to one another helps both people feel encouraged and loved.

In the midst of transitions, a wide range of emotions is common, ranging from the excitement of being in a new place to grief over what was lost. Often periods of transition can be overwhelming, easily contributing to tension in relationships, raising personal concerns, or having a negative impact on one’s spiritual life. It is important to be aware of our own limitations and take time to address problems that have a negative impact on ourselves or those around us.

At Tumaini we seek to provide support in that process, working with individuals, couples, and families to find healing and make changes as needed.

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