



## Minister's In Transition - Hope Network Coaching/Mentoring Sessions

T1 Graduation - First Work	T2 Questioning Viability	T3 Transitioning Out (now)	T4 Transitioning In (New)	T5 Transition to Retirement
The Big Shift - School to Work	Perceived & Real Problems	Leaving Well	Releasing Pain & Hurt	Factors to Consider
Networking & Leading	Reality Check - Minister	Healthy Interviews	Evaluating Strengths & Assets	Ideal Retirement - Minister
Mentoring/Coaching	Reality Check - Church	Managing Expectations	Stories to Use or Retire	Ideal Retirement - Church
Continued Education	Imaging Staying	Friends, Family, Co-Workers	Starting Point	Phase Out vs. Set Date
Realistic Expectations	Imaging Leaving	Healthy Healing	Intentionally Different	All Things Financial
Starting Point	Assessment Tools	Understanding "Their" Needs	Landing Well	Dream Volunteer

Churches are hiring consultants to help shape the “minister search processes” that often extend from 6-18 months. However, many of their top candidates have a shorter window to relocate or take on a new ministry. Hope Network is bringing these two worlds closer together through crafting six coaching sessions for ministers and graduates.

Coaching calls for the sessions to be significantly shaped by the client. The topics outlined are **known issues** at each transitional point. These topics only serve as a starting point or launch point. Imagine if our graduating ministry students could begin a habit of seeking coaches and mentors before they begin their first work (and during subsequent transitions)? How much can the local church pastoral environment be improved? Hope Network has coaches and mentors “at the ready” to begin sessions immediately for candidates graduating this spring.

Mentoring, as compared to coaching, allows for input and direction based on experience, expertise, and best practices. Unlike coaching (which dominantly features good questions and client response), mentoring allows the client to ask for advice, input, etc. when desired. Hope Network coaches are certified life coaches who believe in combining the roles of coach **and** mentor.

*Note: For each of these transitional moments, the Grip-Birkman Assessment tool will be encouraged (and even required at times) to give our mentors and coaches a good baseline to work from. In addition, if the assessment reveals specific areas of concern, you may be referred to a trained GB partner for a session or two specific to this information.*

# Coaching Question Samples for Each Transition:

---

**T1** The shift from college or seminary to localized work is a shift from skill and knowledge to leadership. What would you say have been your best resources for leadership training? What would you say are your strongest leadership strengths? (Session focusing on leading from strength & determining leadership needs.)

**T2** If you were to stay in your current ministry, what would have to change for God to effectively use you? And, for this discussion, any suggested changes would need to focus on attainable changes that are within your influence or you believe are realistic. (Session to also focus on Peter Block's questions about stories we hear, tell, perpetuate, and create.)

**T3** When you think about leaving the work you're in, what would you say are the needs of the congregation that have *no self-benefit*; and, you can effectively meet or assist with? For example, many churches need to hear a minister take ownership of shortcomings without self-deprecating comments. What emotional needs could you bless them with before you go, after you leave, and as others call you about potentially working at the church you're leaving?

**T4** What stories do you need to retire (from your previous ministry/ministries)? These could hamper a fresh, clean start. What stories do you tell that bring unnecessary baggage into your new opportunity?

**T5** When you think about your *personal* ideal retirement date, weigh that against what might be the *church's* ideal retirement date (for you)? When you think about those two dates, what tensions might exist in that space? If those tensions could be resolved through mutual understanding, how might your coming retirement become a point of celebration rather than a point of confusion? tension? conflict?

# Considerations for Ministers

---

- Be pro-active during a time of transition. The stress and strain from transitional moments are shared by all and felt by all (especially your family and friends). Seeking a mentor/coach during these seasons can reduce stress, give you a sounding board to process vocally, and help you see from a different vantage point.

---

- Be willing to approach your leadership (if it's a safe environment) about the coaching/mentoring you are receiving. They may be willing to help with the investment of both time and money (if applicable) in order to minimize damage caused from known transitional stress. Often, groups like Hope Network, or Interim Ministry Partners can steer you towards qualified coaches. Many coaches work pro-bono based on situational needs.

---

- Be wary of self-reliant attitudes you would counsel others against. For example, if someone else were in your shoes, and you would advise them to seek counsel, coaching, mentoring, etc., then listen to your own advice and follow-suit.

---

- Coaching sessions are usually contained to one hour per session and are always instigated by the client, not the coach. During times of stressful transition, we often start to drop appointments or forget assignments. Commit to the coaching/mentoring relationship and a qualified coach will help you guard against these pitfalls in other areas of life (family, ministry, faith, etc.).

# Considerations for Churches

---

- When you detect, as a leadership group or a friend, that your minister might be facing a transition, consider pro-actively supporting coaching and mentoring through both time and money. Good coaching can minimize the tendency towards being an “anxious presence” and increase the quality of relationships on every level. It often prevents an unnecessary change or move.

---

- Understand that ministers often feel isolated since their stress is most often seated in congregational issues (whether real or perceived). If they speak with other members or leaders *without good coaching*, it can cause unintended problems and conflicts. Channeling them towards a mentor or a coach can prevent unnecessary congregational conflict long-term.

---

- If you know your church or organization is going to make a change, you will most likely seek consultants to guide the church through the transition. Consider doing the same for the minister or staff-member in question. Often churches that have made the decision to release a pastoral minister take a “cut-them-off” approach. Hiring a trained coach/mentor for them can prevent membership loss, in-house conflict, etc. and actually speed up their ability to move forward into a new work with a higher level of health.

---

- Be aware that if you’re looking to replace a staff member, it’s probable that the church or leadership-team has a level of unhealthy behaviors that led to the dismissal or resignation. Churches interviewing often state they don’t want to hire a minister with hurts (or someone who needs healing). However, the church interviewing and asking for this, often has a similar level of baggage and/or pain. It would be healthier to openly discuss “what hurts” each are facing, and “what healing” needs to take place.

---

- Be aware that ministers rarely have control of their relocation timeline (on either end).