

Succession: I will not last forever, God. Where are my replacements?

Excerpt from “Leadership Prayers.” pp.37-40

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Help me remember, God, that I can be reassigned, neutralized, or eliminated for a thousand different reasons at any moment. My leadership is precarious, hanging by the silver thread of people’s trust in me. Countless things over which I have no control can break that thread, including your call elsewhere, and I will be gone.

But they need a leader, and when I am gone they must have others to turn to, others whom they trust, who can tell them the truth. Show me those who can lead after me and better than me. Ruffle my spirit when they are near, quicken my heart when I feel their power, and open my eyes to see the special effect they have on people.

Protect me from preserving my own position or power or perspectives at the expense of future leaders. When they point out where I have not led well, shut my mouth and open my heart. Help me make it safe for them to try new things. Let me touch the spirit of those who possess the heart of a servant. I want to know them and love them and watch their energy flow into others around them. I want to claim them for this work and pray them into my place.

I will not have the privilege of choosing who will lead after me. Others will decide that. But I can help prepare leaders, and I can help the organization be ready for them.

Show me the ones who challenge me, the ones with more freedom and stronger faith than I have. Point out the ones who love people better than I do, who lead because they really care about people. Make the spiritual giants visible to me. Let me notice the ones who attract loyal, high-quality friends.

Help me distinguish between the confident and the arrogant, between the humble and the hesitant. Bring out the strong ones who can carry their own burdens and also the burdens of others. Allow tough times that will yield success to those who refuse to give up. Help me advance the leaders for the future.

Oh, God of mercy, don’t let me stay in this job one day too long. And don’t let this all fall apart after I leave.

I will not last forever, God. Where are my replacements?