

Defining Moments
Volume 66—Marking Leadership Moments

MANY LEADERS WORK AT A PACE THAT LEAVES NO TIME to acknowledge and reflect upon significant moments, such as those of decision, transition, or God's provision. They get so caught up in the challenges ahead that they leave important current events uncelebrated.

If a leader misses the opportunity to mark a profound moment in the life of an individual, a group, or within his or her own family, that event's significance and any spiritual lessons attached to it quickly fade from memory. But when a leader takes the time required to highlight that moment, it will never be forgotten.

The following paragraphs offer tips to help leaders identify and creatively mark some of the significant spiritual events in the lives of those they lead.

TIMES AND TOOLS

The Old Testament is full of stories of God instructing leaders to mark significant moments in the life of the community. Sometimes He told them to build an altar or to rename a place. Other times He had them mark moments through celebrations.

Whatever method is used, if thoughtfully conceived and skillfully executed, marked moments can leave lasting memories and build spiritual momentum in the life of a community.

Some examples of significant moments to mark and tools that can be used as markers include:

- **Times of Commitment or Decision**

It is difficult to lead a life driven by godly values and convictions. If someone you know makes an important decision or commitment,

you can serve him or her by publicly marking it. One way you can do so is to document the resolution, have the person sign the documentation, and then frame it for him or her.

- **The Beginning or End of a Season of Life**

Be alert for changing seasons in the lives of those you lead. Mark events such as anniversaries, graduations, weddings, and births.

By marking important transitions you can solidify the lessons learned in the past era and help the individual set a pace for the coming season.

- **Milestones in the Life of a Person or Group**

We are frail human beings who too easily forget the promises of God and the amazing provisions that He makes for us. That is one reason why marking milestones is important.

A timeline can be a powerful tool when used to record milestones in the life of an individual or a group.

Marking milestones can build faith. When someone in your group is tested or hits a wall, you can point back to that moment of God's provision and say, "Remember when God was faithful? Remember when He showed up for us?"

Marking milestones can also build excitement in your group as members begin to wonder, "What will God do next? What is the next moment we will mark together?"

If you practice the art of marking moments in a group setting, it can change the life of your group. You may see a community

identity built around a shared moment—a memory of when God was at work among you.

- **Pivotal Times in the Life of Your Church**

Mark pivotal times such as when a church encounters a crossroads and—rather than slip into a safer, more comfortable “maintenance” mode—decides to trust God and move forward in faith.

Mark moments when the leadership of a ministry passes to an emerging leader. Gather the elders and leadership of the church and pray for the new leader. Hold a baton or key ceremony, capture it with a camera, and give the photograph to the leader.

CHOOSE WORDS AND SETTINGS CAREFULLY

We need to pay particular attention to the way that we mark moments. The words that we use are tremendously important.

Do not make the mistake of trying to bluff your way through ceremonies held to honor people. People know how much thought you have invested on their behalf.

Avoid rambling and speaking in generalities. Take the time required to carefully select the right phrases to highlight the praiseworthy values and commitments of each individual. Strive to say something encouraging that will echo in the person’s mind each time he or she thinks back to that marked moment.

When you decide how to honor someone, carefully consider the unique temperament of the individual. Be discerning on how private or public, long or short a ceremony to hold.

Also, when you honor someone for a specific type of service, do not forget to honor others who have performed the same service.



Whether you use smooth stones, tombstones, spikes, keys, or some other marker, don't miss the chance to have a positive impact on the lives of those you care about—family, friends, and fellow ministry workers.

By seizing appropriate opportunities to mark moments, you can highlight values, create right traditions, and spotlight godly behaviors that you would like to see exhibited by more people. *It takes prayer, thought, and creativity, but your efforts can make a difference for eternity!*

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