

Pastoral Succession: An Engaging Talk with Rev. Dr. Anika Wilson Brown, PhD.

### **Description:**

Rev. Russ talks with Rev. Dr. Anika Wilson Brown about her experience transitioning into the lead pastor role at the historic Union Temple Baptist Church after her father's 53-year tenure. Rev. Brown provides valuable insights on taking over an established legacy as a woman pastor, including owning her unique gift, managing change, and engaging in dialogue to equip the congregation. She also advises church boards to have equitable processes when selecting new pastors. This conversation highlights the importance of embracing gender diversity in church leadership while respecting traditions.

### **Takeaways**:

* Navigating Change: Transitioning into leadership roles involves navigating change, which can be challenging for both leaders and congregants accustomed to a particular way of doing things.
* Unconscious Bias: There may be unconscious biases present in the selection process for new leaders, and it's important to have open and transparent conversations about these biases to ensure fairness.
* Understanding Resistance: Resistance to new leadership may not be personal but rather a response to change itself. Recognizing this can help leaders approach resistance with empathy and understanding.
* Embracing Unique Gifts: Leaders, especially women, should embrace their unique gifts and anointing without apologizing or trying to conform to expectations.

### **Other Key Points Suggested by Rev. Russell St. Bernard**

* Transparency in Selection: Boards and decision-makers should strive for transparency in the selection process, addressing internal biases and ensuring equitable treatment for all candidates.
* Engaging in Dialogue: Engaging in dialogue, such as Bible studies and conversations, can help address questions and concerns about having a woman pastor and foster understanding within the congregation.
* Managing Tensions: Tensions are natural and can be beneficial for growth and progress. Learning to manage tensions effectively can lead to positive outcomes.

### **Resources**

* Connect with Rev. Dr. Anika Wilson Brown, PhD
  + Website: <http://www.anikawilsonbrown.com/>
  + Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/dranikawilsonbrown/>
  + Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1019139131&ref=xav_ig_profile_web>
* 5 Minute Pivot and Other Podcast by Rev. Russell St.Bernard <https://ministrypivot.com/conversations/>
* Articles from Rev. Russell St. Bernard: <https://ministrypivot.com/articles/>

### **Final Takeaway:**

* Spiritual Leadership: Effective leadership involves not only managing practical aspects but also ministering to the spiritual needs of the congregation.
* Honoring Tradition: While change is necessary, it's also important to honor the traditions and history of the ministry, recognizing the contributions of past leaders and long-standing members.
* Continued Learning: Both leaders and congregants should engage in continued learning and reflection, seeking to understand and grow together in their journey of faith and leadership.

**Discussion Questions: (discuss with your team or reflect on your own?)**

* How can leaders effectively address unconscious biases in the selection process for new leadership roles within a ministry? What steps can be taken to promote transparency and fairness?
* Reflecting on the episode, what strategies can leaders employ to navigate resistance to change within a congregation, especially when transitioning into a leadership role previously held by someone else for an extended period?
* In what ways can congregations create a culture of open dialogue and learning to address questions and concerns about having a woman pastor or transitioning to new leadership? How can spiritual leaders facilitate these conversations effectively?

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