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Life In Community: Joining Together To Display The Gospel



Synopsis

WHAT MAKES A COMMUNITY EXTRAORDINARY? When people live in community moved by the gospel and marked by the Spirit, great things happen. They commit to one another. They grieve together, sing together, eat, pray, and play together. They love, serve, honor, encourage, and provide for each other gladly. And they live on mission together. Hearts are healed, walls come down, and outsiders come in. No competition. No pretense. No vain conceit. Just full hearts breaking bread and giving freely. It is nothing short of amazing. Most of us live in a shadow of what God intended for us. Life in Community calls us into the light. Reclaiming Scripture's stunning vision of gospel-centered community, it inspires us to live in love unbounded. Read it, live it, and join the movement: Help unleash the power of extraordinary community. 6-Week group study included.

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Customer Reviews

The credibility of any author has a great deal to do with whether or not they have lived what they are writing. It is obvious from page one (15, actually) that Willis is not elucidating from some lofty point of second-handedness. He opens the good, the bad and the ugly from his own life in community -- page-by-page, story-by-story. His principles are weighty (biblical and solid) but much of their thrust comes from the identification that we immediately make to the Vince and Darlenes, and the Damon and Genes, and the scores of other lives laid bare in this enjoyable, if not convicting, book. Their lives teach us the lessons we so desperately need in order to recapture the wonder of

community marked by the gospel and moved by the Spirit. Should you buy this book and read it? No. You should buy a case of these books and give them to everyone you love and care about and whom you wish to be drawn into a mask-less, loving, hospitable version of the community Jesus gave his life to create.

"Life in Community" is one of the few books out there where the pages are dedicated to true biblical community. There is not much more refreshing to know that we get to join together in God's mission to save a lost world. Together.. Not alone. Not in isolation. I know this author, I've lived life in community with he and his family, and my life will forever be changed as a result. May "Life in Community" do the same for you. Go get it now!!

This is a book I not only enjoyed, but will consider purchasing and giving away copies to others. I received it as a gift myself, and am glad I did! To be sure, Dustin Willis is scratching where I itch. This book is about helping us grow to have the kind of relationships within the church body that God desires for us and that he designed the church to provide. The book gives both a vision for biblical community, how that community is formed, and the necessary and practical values that will be present when we live in true biblical fellowship. Each chapter includes both a study of the Scripture as well as real life examples and practical application of its principles. The chapters end with a helpful set of questions to move you toward living out the principles covered in the book. The book is suitable for small group reflection and includes an appendix for leading a 6-week study. One of the strengths is that it is written in a way that has a broad application. It does not teach a particular method of community (cell groups, Sunday school, etc.) but lays out what biblical community looks like practically and tangibly in any setting. Its principles, in my opinion, are presented in a way that can apply among a variety of sociological and cultural settings. Further, the author recognizes the differences in temperament among people and describes biblical community for a church with both introverts and extroverts (helpful, in my opinion, as much written in this genre seems to be aimed at the latter). In the end, this book is a call to action. There is more than just theory here and there is no new model or method to try. Rather, it's a practical description of what God has designed the body of Christ to be, some practical wisdom on how to get there, and a call for us to pursue that heavenly vision.

I was prepared to not like this book. The word "community" in evangelical circles of late has become a buzzword. Often books about community are just strings of clichés and platitudes which really

don't help with the nuts and bolts of living in Christian fellowship with others. Dustin Willis' book surprised me by avoiding these dangers while providing both theological and application helps for the topic of Christian community. The organization of the book is simple. The first three chapters give the rationale for community. Chapters 4-11 speak to the values needed to live in community. The closing chapter of the book gives the next steps for strong community. Lest you think the book lacks application because there is only a closing chapter on next steps, be advised that the middle chapters of the book are filled with real life stories, tips and illustrations of how the values of Christian community look in every day life. In addition, there are application questions at the close of each chapter and a study guide for a six-week small group at the back of the book. Coming in at about 170 pages, the book is well-written, interesting without being academic, clear without being simple. I commend Dustin Willis for his good work in this book.

As a pastor of a local church, I value resources that blend robust, biblical truth with practical application. The ongoing practice of community within the life of the church was a prime topic throughout the New Testament. Interestingly, there seems to be a void of resources that equip local church pastors and their members to embody these directives. Willis writes as one who has led a local church to portray the love the church should have for one another and as a leader of leaders who aids others in fostering community also. Life in Community outlines Paul's exhortation to the church in Rome and applies his instructions to the complex world of the North American church. Many pastors will find themselves saying, "This is what I've been praying my church would look like" as they read Willis' work. We will use this book to equip small group leaders and local church members to go beyond simply attending the same church to embracing the biblical goal of community. Willis also discusses the massively important intersection between mission and community, showing how these are not mutually exclusive but thrive in tandem. I'm thrilled to have a go-to resource like this!

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