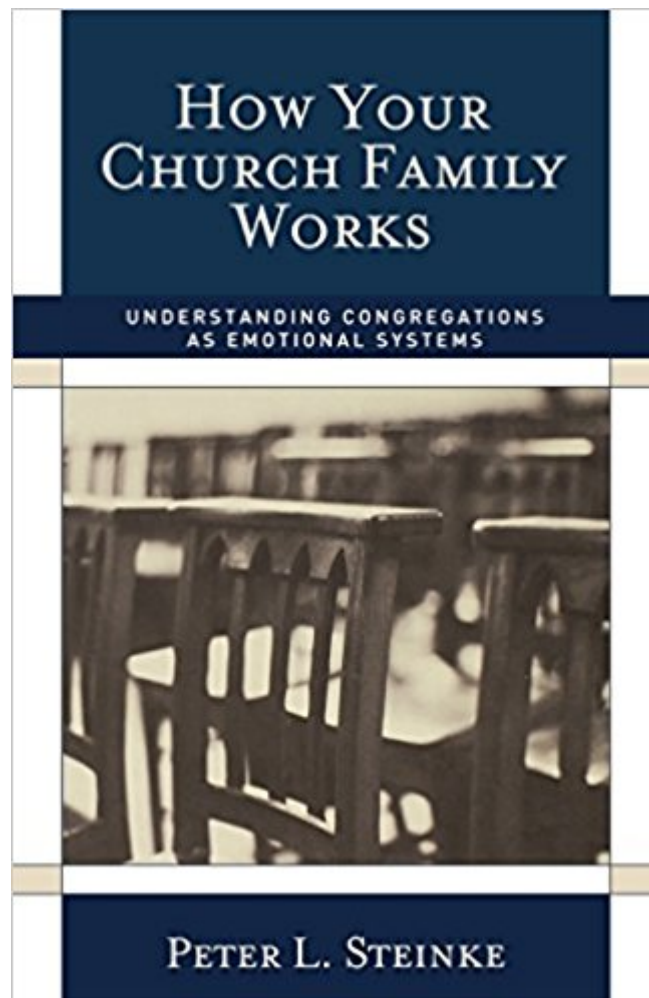




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How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations As Emotional Systems



Synopsis

Drawing on the work of Bowen, Friedman, and his own many years' counseling experience, Peter Steinke shows how to recognize and deal with the emotional roots of such issues as church conflict, leadership roles, congregational change, irresponsible behavior, and the effect of family of origin on current relationships. Discover why working relationships may be "stuck" in certain behaviors. Psychologically sound, theologically grounded, and practically illustrated with case studies, *How Your Church Family Works* will help you better understand how your congregation works and how to keep it healthy. Featuring a new preface and a fresh redesign, the book is a classic work by one of the most respected names in congregational consulting.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

How Your Church Family Works is one of the most insightful books I've read in a long time. . . .I'll be mulling over these systems thinking concepts for years to come. . . .[This book is] worth reading a.s.a.p. (Words on the Word)Dr. Steinke helps readers understand the complex relationships of the family unit, while also discovering ways to make these relationships work more effectively. (Kathie Bender)

Peter L. Steinke is an internationally respected congregational systems consultant who has also served as a parish pastor, an educator, and a therapist for clergy. He is the author of the best-selling book *Healthy Congregations*.

How Your Church Family Works: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly I always wondered why God chose the church. We petty, anxious, selfish people can make a mess of His message. A supernatural "Jesus Saves" written with mountains floating in the air would cause less drama. Assuming God knows what He is doing, we need a way to work together in this family called church. For that, Steinke's book is priceless. The Good: This book was great " fun to read, immensely practical, convicting and encouraging. I can't recommend it highly enough " especially to those in ministry. I especially liked the "7 Responses to Promote Health: Self not others, strength not weakness; process not content; challenge not comfort, integrity not unity; system not symptom; direction not condition." OK, you need definitions to apply, but trust me they are good. I also was helped by the idea of Triangles. "When A is at odds with B, the most anxious of the pair introduces C (third party) to reduce anxiety between A and B. For example, God confronts Adam about his disobedience. Anxious Adam shifts the burden to Eve. When she encounters God, Eve blames the snake." So glad I've never done that. And my favorite quote: "Anxiety creates its own disaster." Gregory Bateson. The Bad: The first half is more theoretical; the second half has more stories to illustrate the truths. And graphs. So, the second half is way more interesting. The bad thing is, you can't really understand the second half without reading through from the beginning. Trust me on this one. To Steinke's credit, even the first half is a good read. The Ugly: I've been in church work for about 30 years, and now this book comes out. I'd have handled a lot of ugly in a more redemption fashion, had Steinke written this and I applied it sooner. So, it's all Steinke's fault. Thanks Steinke, now no more anxiety between me A and them B. dan@danielcooley.com

Overview Within the pages of How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems, author Peter L. Steinke has put together a necessary tool for anyone looking to go into the ministry and be a leader in the Church. In this day and age the Church is in a perilous state, where anxiety is rampant and local churches are dissolving. This book offers wise insight into how our church congregations are more than just a building, or group of people, but living, anxious, and emotional systems. This book offers a crash course on systematic thinking, and an in-depth study on anxiety. Peter L. Steinke has written a book that is wonderfully eye opening. Problems This book starts off by giving a very brief crash course on systems and systematic thinking, then goes into a more in-depth study on anxiety, though both are helpful, this book covers them disproportionately. Going off of the title of the book, a reader could feel slightly

mislead, because after just the first chapter Peter L. Steinke switches from the topic of systems, to anxiety- a topic that takes up the rest of the book. It would seem more logical to have either written two separate books: one about systems and systematic thinking in the Church, and the other about anxiety in the Church. The way it is designed there is just not enough information given to fully understand systems and systematic thinking. This book does contain the author's personal opinion as to certain denominations belonging to the Church that many would disagree with; though to some it may be seen as a benefit, to others it may be a hindrance. Either way, the information contained in this book is invaluable to the Church, regardless of denominational background.

Benefits The author starts out by spending a chapter discussing what systems are. Though it is only a crash course on systems, it is a good primer to systematic thinking. The author provides an in-depth study on anxiety in general and in the Church. Throughout the book the author provides many useful illustrations and graphs to help the reader picture and understand this very complicated subject. Though this subject is complicated, this book covers systems and the issue of anxiety in a way that the average reader can understand and apply.

Academic Setting Because of its length and disproportional design, this book is not recommended for a systems or pastoral class, but rather a counseling class. This book would be suited better for a congregational leaders study, or for personal study.

Structure This book is divided into two sections, each containing five chapters. The first chapter deals with systems, while the following chapters deal with the problem of anxiety in the Church.

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