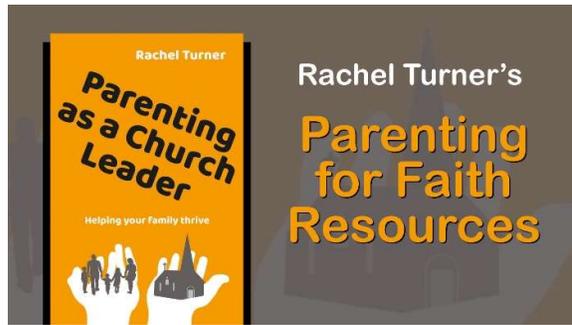


Book review by Raewyn Moodie: Parenting as a Church Leader by Rachel Turner



This book was one of my easiest reads in the past few months, but it was also hard as I reflected how much this book would have helped me when I was a parent and also a pastor in a church.

We are all told as pastors that our own families need to come before church ministry, but in practice this is a very difficult thing to do! When that urgent pastoral call comes in which you

'just have to respond to' our kids often get the message that they come second to mum or dad's job. The mornings when they really don't want to be at church but have to come because Mum or Dad are leading/teaching/preaching can be really difficult. Then there is the pressure that as a leader or pastor you feel because your family is on show and you want them to act perfectly as a good role model to the rest of the church, but underneath it all we know that is impossible as there are no perfect families.

Rachel Turner covers all these scenarios and more in her practical and well-written book, which comes from her own experience as well as interviews and research with many other pastors from all over the world.

Some chapter headings are: Growing connection in the midst of ministry, coaching our children through the complexity of church, removing the competition of needs, working from home, protecting our children from exposure, living in the goldfish bowl: dealing with congregational expectations, navigating confidentiality, the strength of empowering our children's faith, coaching our children in how they engage with church.

All of these are so helpful and practically written. "The answer isn't to suddenly change our schedules so that we are 100% available to our families... All we need to do is change the focus from 'this is the good reason why I chose them over you' to simply 'I really want to be there, but I've got a job thing and so I can't. I'm disappointed I can't be there, but here's how we can find another time and space to experience connection, so we don't miss out on too much.' P. 64

Another section covers the power of framing. "Framing is simply explaining to others what they are looking at, so they can understand the situation and know how to engage with it... In whichever place you choose to do so, frame your values in your own words and express them from your heart... examples from church leaders who have expressed their parenting approach to their congregation ... 'We are parents on the journey of trying to help our children grow in finding their path every day and in walking with God along the way. We make a lot of mistakes, but we are figuring it out, just as you are. We love that we have a church community to be family in, and that you love and support us as we try!'" P. 106

I cannot recommend this book more highly to those parenting as church leaders. You may also be interested in her free online course www.parentingforfaith.org This is an inspiration to all parents and grandparents whether in ministry or not.

May God bless you in your parenting journeys!