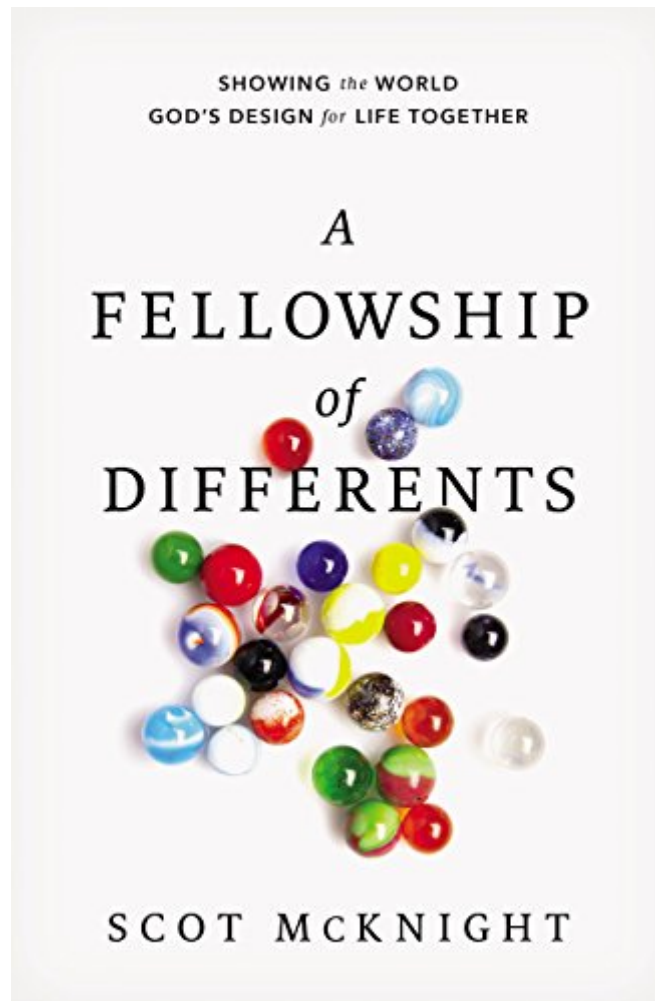


The book was found

A Fellowship Of Differents: Showing The World God's Design For Life Together



Synopsis

In this compelling book, Scot McKnight shares his personal experience in the church as well as his study of the Apostle Paul to answer this significant question: "What is the church supposed to be?" For most of us the church is a place we go to on Sunday to hear a sermon or to participate in worship or to partake in communion or to fellowship with other Christians. The church is all contained within one or two hours on Sunday morning. The church the Apostle Paul talks about is designed by God to be a fellowship of difference—how people differ socially—and difference—how people differ culturally. God did not design the church to be a two-hour experience on Sunday but a mixture of people from all across the map and spectrum: men and women, rich and poor, Caucasians or African Americans, and Mexican Americans, Latin Americans, Asian Americans, and Indian Americans, and a mixture of people with varying personalities and tastes. The church McKnight grew up in was a fellowship of sameness and likes. There was almost no variety in his church. White folks, same beliefs about everything, same tastes in music and worship and sermons and lifestyle. Because of his experience, he writes incisively and compellingly. The church is God's world-changing social experiment of bringing unlikes and differences to the table to share life with one another as a new kind of family. When this happens we show to the world what love, justice, peace, reconciliation, and life together is designed by God to be. The church is God's show-and-tell for the world to see how God wants us to live as a family.

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Customer Reviews

"This idea, that Paul's mission was a mixed assembly of different, lies at the core of my beliefs about how the whole Bible works | Are we willing to embrace the diversity of the church as 'the very thing God most wants'? (pp. 89, 91, italics in original) The need for the the Church to become more unified is, thankfully, receiving some long-overdue attention. This book is NT scholar Scot McKnight's contribution to the topic. McKnight is widely-known in at least three ways: As a blogger, as an author of biblical commentaries, and as an author of popular-level books on the Christian life, the atonement, and Bible interpretation. This book falls into the third category: books written for the church rather than the academy. Prior to this book, I had only read McKnight via his other two categories: his blog and his commentaries. My impression of McKnight prior to this book was mixed, and so is my impression of this book. (I have enjoyed McKnight's emphasis on the kingdom of God, some of his challenges to Calvinist thinking, and his emphasis on the social and ethical aspects of Christian transformation. I am less than happy with things like his adoption of gender role egalitarianism or his promotion of evolutionary creationism.) So, what do I think about A Fellowship of Differents? SOME THINGS I LIKE: * The emphasis that church life shapes our understanding of the the Christian life. Examples: Highly emotional revival meetings that call people to pray the Sinner's Prayer might teach us to think of salvation as only a one-time event. Congregations where everyone looks the same (class, ethnicity) might lead us to overlook what the NT says about the radical social composition of Jesus' Church.

Scot McKnight is a pretty popular author, although I've not read any of his other books. I've read blog posts and articles from time to time and I respect his suggestions greatly when it comes to biblical commentaries. He's a top-notch scholar and I was excited to read his new book, A Fellowship of Differents, a challenging look at how God calls Christians to live and worship together. The book follows largely the life and teachings of Paul in an attempt to re-orient the often confused nature and construction of modern congregations. At the same time, McKnight is gracious

and uplifting in addressing these congregations and the value of a local worshiping body in the formation and continuation of the Christian faith. The book is difficult in places, a real challenge to what we've come to see as normal comfort in the American Church. In other places it reinfuses a love of those people who nurtured us in faith, even if we may now differ in perspective quite greatly. But overall, McKnight addresses the positive, essential attributes of what it means to live together in Christ. Chief among those is diversity, not just racially or culturally, but also theologically and politically and in every way imaginable. For him (and for Paul), the core of the gospel is making room for all people to live together in love. It's a lofty goal and as the book is fleshed out, the many ways in which that can be difficult are addressed. In the Afterward, McKnight mentions the book was once much longer than its current 250 or so pages. That becomes pretty clear as he seems to be writing the bare minimum of his thoughts in some sections. He is careful to step forward and address some topics in detail. He addresses the unique issues of homosexuality in the modern Church with grace and calm.

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