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What Is A Healthy Church? (IX Marks) (9 Marks Of A Healthy Church)



Synopsis

What is an ideal church, and how can you tell? How does it look different from other churches? More importantly, how does it act differently, especially in society? Many of us aren't sure how to answer those questions, even though we probably have some preconceived idea. But with this book, you don't have to wonder any more. Author Mark Dever seeks to help believers recognize the key characteristics of a healthy church: expositional preaching, biblical theology, and a right understanding of the gospel. Dever then calls us to develop those characteristics in our own churches. By following the example of New Testament authors and addressing church members from pastors to pew sitters, Dever challenges all believers to do their part in maintaining the local church. *What Is a Healthy Church?* offers timeless truths and practical principles to help each of us fulfill our God-given roles in the body of Christ.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I spoke to Mark Dever just about a year ago and asked him if there were any new books in his future. At that time he mentioned that he'd soon have a book out dealing with personal evangelism but that he had nothing planned after that. It seems that his plans changed! The book on evangelism is due for release in just a few days (September 11). It has been preceded by *What is a Healthy Church* and will be followed by *The Church and Her Challenges*. *What is a Healthy Church?* is a shortened, introductory version of Dever's previous book *9 Marks of a Healthy Church* written primarily for people in the pews rather than the men in the pulpits. After all, church health is not the

sole responsibility of a local church's leadership. "If you call yourself a Christian but you think a book about healthy churches is a book for church leaders or maybe for those 'theological types,' while you would rather read books about the church life, it may be time to stop and consider again exactly what the Bible says a Christian is." Said even more forcefully, "you and all the members of your church, Christian, are finally responsible before God for what your church becomes, not your pastors and other leaders--you." Despite this, we might rightly ask, How many Christians have ever read a book about church health? If you are familiar with Mark Dever's ministry you know that he can be provocative, though always in a sanctified way. This book is no exception. Consider this, a portion of a short anecdote he shares: "If you call yourself a Christian but you are not a member of the church you regularly attend, I worry that you might be going to hell." Why would Dever extend such a warning and do so at the beginning of the book?

Mark Dever has written *What is a Healthy Church?* as a shorter, concise, companion piece to his larger volume *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. As such, this review will roughly encompass the merits of both, since the shorter book remains very true to the original. *Healthy Church* is written on the premise that there are nine "marks" that identify a healthy church. Dever is very clear in stating that these marks do not define a church, as he affirms the classical church doctrine that a church is a regular gathering of believers that teaches the Bible and administers sacraments. *Healthy Church* does not seek to uncover the most basic definition of a church or to codify the minimum requirements for a church to be a true church. Rather, this book seeks to enable the reader to evaluate his own church or others for their health, with the rationale that a believer should seek a healthy church "or seek to improve the health of his own church" since "a healthy church is a congregation that increasingly reflects God's character as His character has been revealed in His Word." *Healthy Church* is divided up into three sections. The first sets out to describe and identify a healthy church. It attempts to win readers to the understanding that a healthy church is vital to Christian life. The primary arguments center on the church's role in God's plan for spreading the gospel, the church's unique ability to combat sin in its members, and the church's representation of God's character. In this section and throughout the book, Dever supports his premises with an incredible amount of scripture while still communicating integral truths in the terms of the layperson.

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