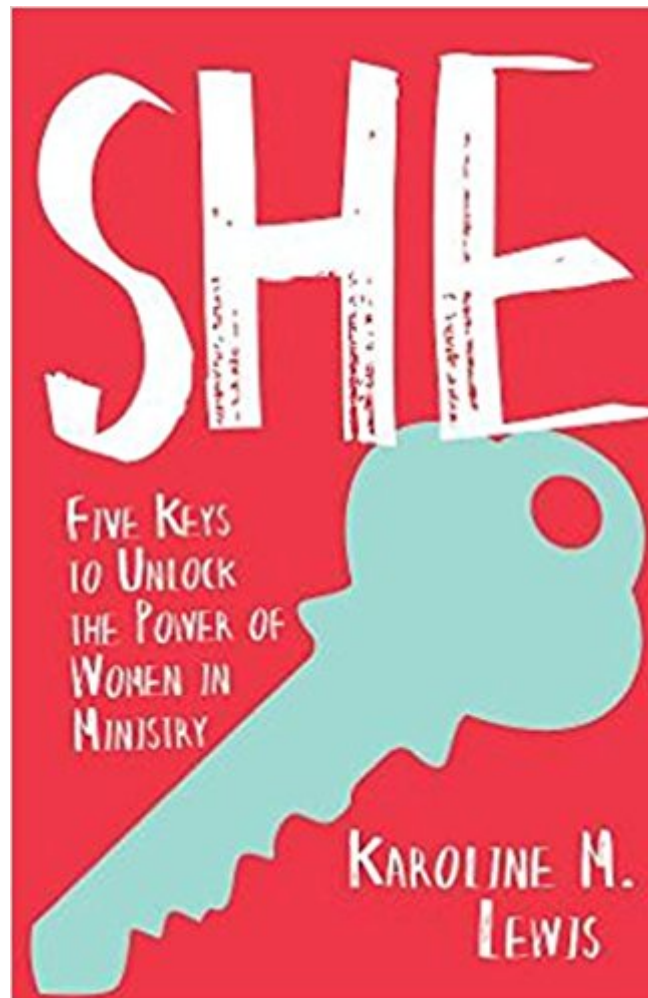




The book was found

She: Five Keys To Unlock The Power Of Women In Ministry



Synopsis

We are not all the same. The time has come for us to honestly name the ways we are different and similar so that we can serve together in unity, grace and trust. Women in ministry experience unique challenges in their church settings which continue to hinder their vocational, professional, and personal success. Women in ministry need a trusted and comprehensive resource not only to be able to survive but to thrive in their places of call. She provides theoretical, theological, and practical frameworks and strategies for flourishing as a woman in ministry and engages critical reflection on the practice of ministry in light of current feminist theory, biblical interpretation, and experience. Covering everything from biblical arguments for and against women in the church to what not to wear, this book offers background information and tools for negotiating the many and varied issues that woman in ministry face, including leadership, the authority and office of the clergy, and structures and power in the church. A trusted and comprehensive resource for women in ministry, equipping them to thrive in their places of call, and for the men who serve alongside them.

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Customer Reviews

Karoline M. Lewis (Ph.D. Emory University), holds the Marbury Anderson Chair in Biblical Preaching at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN. She is a regularly featured presenter and preacher at the Festival of Homiletics and a frequent contributor for numerous Christian journals and online resources, including the popular website WorkingPreacher.org where she also co-hosts the

site's weekly podcast, Sermon Brainwave, and authors the site's weekly column, Dear Working Preacher. She lives in St. Paul, Minnesota.

When I first contemplated the ministry in my early thirties - I knew going in my gender would be an issue. In fact, I thought women who went into it without having a solid Biblical response defending their calling were naive and when they experienced people telling them they should not be a pastor, well really - what did they expect? Truthfully, the ones who are blunt and just tell me that I shouldn't be a pastor based on this passage or that passage are the easy ones to deal with (though if you need those arguments, the first chapter expertly outlines the issues of the authority of scripture and matters of interpretation). It's the more insidious way in which the church as a whole deals with sexism - on the one hand affirming women "get to be" pastors in many denominations, and on the other hand, still not taking their experiences seriously by utilizing the patriarchal system to suppress and stifle abusive situations many female pastors experience with male colleagues or supervisors. Dr. Karoline Lewis speaks into that reality and that truth with a blunt yet eloquent exposition of these issues. What hit home in particular were not just the big issues (yes, I've experienced the blatant verbal sexual harassment - anywhere from demeaning comments to just out and out threats to keep quiet or else) but the realization that for my entire professional life I had been playing a much more subtle game in regards to my gender. I have always been a "team player" and would say, "as long as the work or ministry happens" I'd overlook things like having my ideas co-opted by a male because I knew that was the only way they'd ever get adopted or put into use. I learned to accept simply planting ideas that would be shot down initially, only to weeks later suddenly have them presented back to me (and usually others) as what we were going to do by the individual I'd taken the idea to - but presented as his own. I shrugged such experiences off as just the reality. Dr. Lewis helps the reader to understand that these power-play games are not OK and only undermine moving us forward in the areas of gender equality. The introduction alone had me in tears with the following statement: "Nor is it helpful to argue or insist that the church is ontologically different from the rest of the world and its potentially corrupt institutions, that the church is an oasis of acceptance and hospitality, or that the church is devoid of human brokenness that leads to power gone awry. The church is not immune to dysfunction and no amount of belief otherwise will free it from that truth. While we certainly want it to be true that the church should be these things, it is not and, in fact, can be far worse than secular institutions." This statement was one of the most heartbreaking for me because I find myself saying on an all too regular basis - "at least in the secular world you see it coming. You expect it. But it's somehow worse in the church because it's always veiled in this

haze of how we SHOULD operate rather than how we DO operate. We expect better than what we're getting."The book goes on to discuss the difference between power and abuse, issues of dating, marriage, children, sexuality, and leadership styles. For me, it hit a deeply personal chord. For others, it may just be useful information to know that this is what goes on. But at its core - it is truth-telling. It is pulling back the rug to reveal the dirt we've been trying to hide for so long that desperately needs to be cleaned up if the church is to remain relevant for future generations.

Full disclosure: I am not a woman in ministry, nor am I even a woman. However, this was an extremely important and insightful book for me to read. Karoline Lewis is both an ordained pastor in the ELCA, and a seminary professor--in less than 200 pages, she shows us the heart of a pastor and the sharp mind of an academic, leading us to see both the deep challenges and rich joys that women in ministry experience. While she writes as a pastor, you do not need to be a pastor to be powerfully moved by Dr. Lewis's message. She lays a strong foundation in examining how the way we think of the Bible, the way we read and interpret Scripture fundamentally affects our religious views in ways we often don't take the time to think about or question. From there, she examines five keys to unlocking, as the subtitle says, "the power of women in ministry." Martin Luther wrote that a theologian of the cross calls a thing what it is. Dr. Lewis, as one whose theology is cross-shaped, does exactly that in this book. She tells sometimes hard truths about the church, about sexism, about the overt and covert ways in which the church undermines the power of women. The words we use, the ideas and stories we privilege, the way our congregations and synods and denominations are structured--there are many factors working against women being able to fully live into their God-given call, and until that changes, we as the church are less for it. If you are a woman in ministry, you need to read this book. You will find that you are not alone and you will be strengthened and empowered in your ministry, whether that's as clergy or as a layperson. If you're a man in ministry, you need to read this book. For most of its history, the church has been extremely patriarchal in nature, and for those who occupy the position of power and privilege, it can be difficult to even see sometimes. Our words, our actions, our attitudes, our theology--they all have the ability to build up and tear down, often in ways we can't realize without another voice pointing it out to us. This book is one such voice. If you are not in ministry, but you love the church and care about those who are, you need to read this book. It's not just ministry colleagues who can build up or tear down, but it's also church councils, committees, individuals before and after worship...you name it, however we are involved in the life of the church, if we care about those who have been charged with shepherding it, this book gives us a window into the things they face. If you think women should

not be in ministry, you need to read this book. Not even necessarily to change your mind, but to give you an intelligent yet passionate view from the "other side." Dr. Lewis points out that this isn't about winning arguments, but about inviting conversation. No matter what the issue may be, we owe it to ourselves to learn as much as we can about all sides of it in order to be able to fully understand the underlying context and the implications of the views we (and those with whom we disagree) hold. This book would be a great resource in that endeavor. Even if you don't agree with a single thing Dr. Lewis says, by the end you will understand her side of the conversation, and understanding even in the midst of disagreement is a very good thing. Bottom line--just buy the book. Read the book. No matter your background, no matter your context, you will grow and learn and come out richer for the experience. And you can't ask for much more than that.

Karoline Lewis's book "She - 5 Keys to Unlock the Power of Women in Ministry" speaks to the very heart of women's experiences in ministry. Through the 5 Keys, she provides a glimpse of the struggles, the blessings and the importance of finding and keeping our voices as we navigate through the biblical text and pastoral leadership. Lewis speaks into my soul as she explains, "To believe in your own voice, you have to believe in your identity and your own experience and believe that it deserves to be spoken out loud, it needs to be heard, and it needs to be heard by others." Often times, women minimize their struggles as unimportant but Lewis provides the reader with methods and means in which to recognize the value of embracing their experiences so that the hurt, pain, growth and grace can be shared with others. As a woman in ministry, identifying God's call in my life has been years in the making and this book has provided me with practical ways to use my past challenges to encourage women to find their voices. Karoline is a real person with real-life wisdom and who has a passion to empower women to speak with confidence and be heard. This is a must read!

Before reading this book, I thought I had a grasp on how to support women in ministry. Karoline not only deepened my knowledge but convicted my heart to change my role in supporting women (especially the young girls in our congregation) when they are called to lead. I strongly recommend this as a must read for male pastors.

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