When the Church Was a Family
Recapturing Jesus’ Vision for Authentic Christian Community
by Joseph H. Hellerman

ABOUT THE BOOK
Spiritual formation occurs primarily in the context of community. But as the modern cultural norm of what social scientists call “radical American individualism” extends itself, many Christians grow lax in their relational accountability to the church. Faith threatens to become an “I” not “us,” a “my God” not “our God” concern.

When the Church Was a Family calls believers back to the wisdom of the first century, examining the early Christian church from a socio-historical perspective and applying the findings to the evangelical church in America today. With confidence, author Joseph Hellerman writes intentionally to traditional church leaders and emerging church visionaries alike, believing what is detailed here about Jesus’ original vision for authentic Christian community will deeply satisfy the relational longings of both audiences.

BEST-SELLING POINTS
• A study of the early Christian church in the Mediterranean region and its emphasis on collective good over individual desire clarifies much about what is wrong with the American church today.
• Relevant to small groups, missional outreach, church health, etc.
• “Community is a word that can mean so many different things to different people. Family is a beautiful metaphor for the church, yet it is often not experienced by the church. In When the Church Was a Family, Joe raises a hopeful look at how the church today can glean what biblical community was from the early church and translate that to what community would look like today.”
  —Dan Kimball, author of They Like Jesus but not the Church
• “I do not know of a single resource on the New Testament and the contemporary importance of community and family that is so well resourced and easy to read as Hellerman’s When the Church was a Family. Its pages brim with deeply moving, hope-filled points and insightful practical application.”
  —J. P. Moreland, author of Kingdom Triangle

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Dr. Joe Hellerman is professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Talbot School of Theology. He also serves as a team pastor at Oceanside Christian Fellowship, El Segundo, CA, a church that has become a laboratory of sorts for his vision of the church as a family. Joe’s education includes an M.Div. and Th.M. from Talbot, and a Ph.D. in History of Christianity from UCLA.

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Release Date: August 1, 2009
Retail Price: $19.99
Format: Trade paper
Page Count: 240
Trim Size: 6 x 9
Spine Width: 0.5"
Weight: 0.93 lb
Carton Quantity: 36

BISAC: REL108030 RELIGION/Christian Church/Leadership
ECPA Category: Church & Ministry/Pastoral Help/
Professional Growth and Development
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