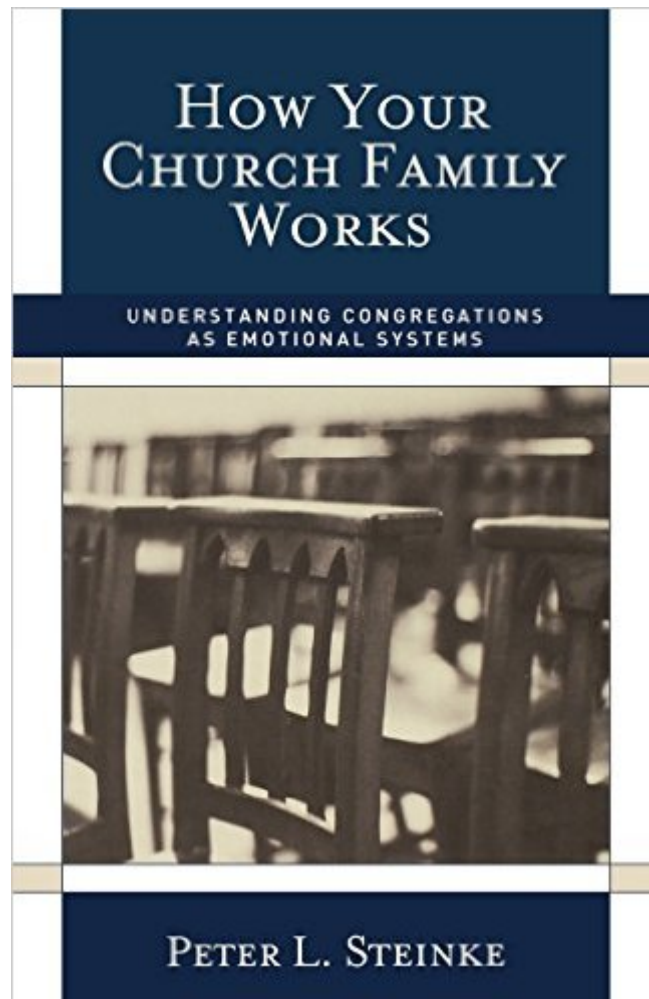


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# How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations As Emotional Systems



## Synopsis

Drawing on the work of Bowen, Friedman, and his own many years' counseling experience, Peter Steinke shows how to recognize and deal with the emotional roots of such issues as church conflict, leadership roles, congregational change, irresponsible behavior, and the effect of family of origin on current relationships. Discover why working relationships may be "stuck" in certain behaviors. Psychologically sound, theologically grounded, and practically illustrated with case studies, *How Your Church Family Works* will help you better understand how your congregation works and how to keep it healthy. Featuring a new preface and a fresh redesign, the book is a classic work by one of the most respected names in congregational consulting.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In this text and its companion volume, 'Healthy Congregations', Peter Steinke puts together a wonderful aid to ministers and congregational leaders who struggle to understand the dynamics of their congregations. Large or small, urban or rural, all congregations experience tensions, conflicts, emotions and situations that require careful dealing and compassionate understanding. Human interactions are among the most complex things possible for study - they do follow patterns on micro- and macro-scopic levels, but there are so many variables that it is impossible to predict and plan with total accuracy (and so much the better, many would hold, including this author). Yet the application of field theory types of paradigms to understanding congregational dynamics is worthwhile. There is a self-perpetuation and internal cohesion to many of the processes, and they

often seem 'to take a life of their own', in other words, are somehow self-generating. We tend to think of churches as places of holiness and justice, forgetting that because they are comprised of human beings at all levels, they are just as susceptible to corruption, pettiness, and the petty place-seeking and unhealthy dynamics of any other human organisation. That this should not be so is granted - that it is often so is a sad reality. It is not denominationally-specific, either - even those denominations that pride themselves on fairness, justice, rationality, or any other positive quality can find itself falling victim to its own people. The church is not a family. Steinke says this very directly. However, there are significant patterns that parallel family dynamics, and in many metaphoric senses, church communities are meant to be a family.

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