

## ***Busy Living: Blessing not Burden***

Emma Ineson (Continuum, 2007)

Can women fulfil the dual roles of 'public priest and domestic goddess'? Can one woman not only open the fete, but bake a cake for the Mothers' Union stall? This book has been written for women who grew up with the expectation that they could 'have it all', but who find they struggle with so many competing expectations.

What makes this book different is that the author's solution is not to be less busy. Instead, Ineson has written for women who *enjoy* being busy, but don't want to collapse in the process. While one recent author urges people to 'do nothing' as a way of coping with the 'busy' culture, *Busy Living* urges women to live life to the full, and be busy – without feeling overwhelmed.

One key to this is the notion of partnership, working together with others. The premise of the book is that increased partnership and communication between men and women will lead to a healthier way of life for both. Ineson illustrates this equality and mutuality from Scripture, from her experience of ministry and from her own marriage.

It's a common 21<sup>st</sup> century complaint that we are 'busy'. But what does this mean? Ineson examines the concept of 'busyness' and finds that it's 'a state of mind rather than a state of affairs.' She suggests that women have more of a problem with busyness than men do because they are often trying to do work *and* family. She also uncovers the subtle but insidious message that 'busy people are successful', which drives some people to be busy.

The book explores various areas of life: work and occupation, spirituality, Christian service, friendship, marriage, children, and rest. Each chapter explores an issue through the 'messages' behind it, 'a godly perspective', how the key concepts of 'partnership and sacrifice' bear on it, and 'stepping above': some practical suggestions on how to survive and thrive within a busy life.

Ineson writes with a light touch. Scripture, experience and precept are woven together, and her personal examples give both flesh and humour to the book. It's an attractively presented book.

*Busy Living* concludes with a chapter on 'life', reflecting on Jesus' statement: 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' This draws some of the threads together. Ineson urges her readers to live lives of sacrifice, and partnership with others, in order to live such a full life. As we find out what God calls us to do (and not do), and make priorities accordingly, then, Ineson suggests, we will be busy – but joyful.

Too busy to read the book?! If you feel worn down with juggling ministry and family, then reading it – and acting on it – might just restore your sanity and help you find renewed blessing in your busyness.

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