

Stepping Up: Women's Guide to Career Development

Nadine Kazerounian (McGraw-Hill, 2002)

I'm not aware of any Christian books on career development, let alone career development for women. We may see our call to church leadership or leadership in a Christian organization as 'vocation' rather than 'career'. Yet perhaps we are naïve, as women and as Christians. Some research suggests that one reason why women find it hard to move into senior posts in a business context is lack of career planning. If the same is true in the church, then this book could be a useful starting point. Much of this book is as applicable to a church or Christian context as to the business context which the author primarily has in mind.

The book aims to be a practical handbook for women managers, based on research. One of the author's first findings was that all the 'successful' women she interviewed had planned their careers; they did not just happen.

This is a big issue for Christians: we give God our futures, we submit to his leadership. But how much does he want us to take responsibility ourselves, and be pro-active about developing our talents and maximising our opportunities?

Kazerounian explores some of the myths around women and work – that women are not ambitious, for example (another no-no for Christians?), that women lack the harder skills, that women are tied to their husband's careers.

Another of her key research findings is that 'successful' women's ability as leaders springs principally from a high level of self-esteem. This is another area of challenge for many women, and perhaps surprisingly, for Christian women. The author brings both insight and suggestions for ways forward.

I found much practical advice in the sections on how to dress, networking, time management and career-life planning.

This could be both an eye-opening read and a valuable reference book for any woman in a leadership position.

Rosie Ward

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