



Barefoot Church: Serving the Least in a Consumer Culture

Brandon Hatmaker

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People are hungry to make a difference in their community, yet most don't know where to start. In fact, "serving the least" is often one of the most neglected biblical mandates in the church. Barefoot Church shows readers how today's church can be a catalyst for individual, collective, and social renewal in any context. Whether pastors or laypeople, readers will discover practical ideas that end up being as much about the Gospel and personal transformation as they are about serving the poor. Here they will see how the organizational structure of the church can be created or redesigned for mission in any context. Drawing from his own journey, Brandon Hatmaker proves to readers that serving the least is not a trendy act of benevolence but a lifestyle of authentic community and spiritual transformation. As Hatmaker writes, "My hope is that God would open our eyes more and more to the needs of our community. And that we would see it as the church's responsibility to lead the charge."

Barefoot Church: Serving the Least in a Consumer Culture Details

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From Reader Review Barefoot Church: Serving the Least in a Consumer Culture for online ebook

Robert Logan says

I'll tip my hand right from the beginning. Barefoot Church: Serving the Least in a Consumer Culture is one of the best books I've read all year. It's filled with great, inspiring stories that come from real life, hands-on ministry experience. If you've ever wondered whether this church thing ever works, you need to read this book. It provides much-needed hope and direction, as well as a shift in the way we think about what defines "success" in the church.

Hatmaker is careful to avoid common pitfalls. Without in any way letting the church off the hook for all its failings, Brandon still keeps the perspective positive: on what we can do. There's no sense of giving up. He also addresses the tangling and untangling of evangelism and social action deftly and realistically: a solid theological work.

Although early on the author says that the point is not to copy his model, I do hope that you'll steal an idea here or there. Pick and choose some elements from his ministry to incorporate into your own. The broader Kingdom will be the better for it.

Steve Mayall says

The author thought he had the dream job: pastoring a megachurch. But an encounter with a homeless man who wanted his Texan boots changed all that. That sparked the beginning of a journey of discovery of what it means for the Church of Jesus Christ to be missional. Maybe I should let the author speak for himself about that: "Barefoot Church is not about attractional, seeker-sensitive, culturally relevant, or other models. It is not a church growth strategy or new style of church. Contrary to popular belief, serving the least does not make a missional church. It's about serving the least and your neighbor. It's about balancing the fasting and the feast."

Cory Saint-Esprit says

So long winded. The stories when used were good, although a little self-centered as to "look how great our church is!" Honestly the last chapter was the best and I felt he could've taken our 2-3 other chapters to get to the practical side.

The first 9 chapters are the basis behind why we must serve - the last chapter is the road map to creating that culture of service.

Lori says

This book puts into words so many of the things I've been thinking and feeling for several years.

Sherrie says

Excellent book. The Church needs to get back to what Christ commissioned is to do. This is a solid, practical book on ways to do just that. It's not about our image. It's serving the least, serving in the margins, loving our neighbor. Not just circling the wagons and taking care of "our own".

Jason says

When the student is ready, the teacher will appear. Great book.

Jeanie says

I have very mixed feelings about this book. Brandon Hatmaker has a wonderful church and ministry that is mission centered. My problem is motivation which he addresses in this book but I felt that it was conflicting. In the beginning of the book he laid out that Hollywood does more for the poor than the church. This really hit wrong. There is so much that we don't know. Some christians are very quiet about what they do for the kingdom. However, Hollywood likes to toot their horn. So should our motivation be so we look better to hollywood or because of the Gospel. That is the problem with church as I see it. We have a poor picture of who God is, what he has done and because of that our motivation is out of wack. It should be of thanksgiving that is from the joy of our salvation. I thought Hatmaker did a poor job of addressing the motivation. It is a heart issue. As a pastor's responsibility is to PROCLAIM the truth of who God is. God has revealed much about who he is in his word. It is our responsibility to respond to that teaching. Even Jesus had many leave him because his teaching became hard. The people were looking for a free meal, end of oppression, etc. John 6. He then asked his disciples if they were going to leave and they replied "Where would we go". I felt that this was more of a works than of who God is. I don't think that was the intention but it was not balanced. I do recommend this book for those churches and individuals that are missional minded. He had great ideals how churches can reach out to their city. He did mention that many times they do come along other non profits and there is no hidden agenda from the church. We are called to make disciples. To make life with others so that we can share the good news of who Jesus is.

Daniel Hendon says

Best book on being the church I've read in a long time.

Amanda Rogers Torres says

I loved the way this challenged my thinking about the church. Brandon's story gives me hope that there is MORE. So very thankful for this book!

Laurel Williston says

This book was informative and inspirational. It described the author's journey to pastoring a local church that focuses on serving the least of these while bringing spiritual maturity to the lives of its people. It re-awakened hope in me that a church body that prioritizes what Jesus prioritized and creates actual Christians (little Christs) may be possible yet today in American culture. If you want to read about Christianity that resembles the way Christ lived and prioritizes the gospel as well as being on mission and mutual encouragement, this is the book for you!

Teri Underwood says

One of the very best books I have read on what church can and should look like. I think I highlighted 2/3 of the book. A must read for church leadership ... and for the rest of us who are wondering how to serve like Christ. Be prepared though, this book will stomp on your toes!

Ryan says

Barefoot Church, in my humble opinion, is a manifesto for the church to embrace its identity as the Church. If we claim to be followers of Jesus there comes with that a certain look, attitude, and action. Brandon Hatmaker helps to lay forth the blueprint for what that ought to look like. The beauty in how he accomplishes this however, is that it's not done in a you-copy-me sort of way. Rather, it's accomplished through extensive Scriptural backing and by telling his story (and the story of Austin New Church) in such a way that you're left feeling empowered and inspired to go forth and begin writing your own story.

Without question, this is a must read for the follower of Jesus who longs to see the Church reach it's fingers deep into the heart of God. It's for those frustrated with the status quo of church life and who long to see something of Kingdom significance happen in their midst. It's for those who can no longer sit still in their pew for their soul groans and aches too loudly to ignore and they must set their feet to the streets to rub up against those in need of Jesus.

Be not mistaken, Barefoot Church isn't for the faint of heart. It's a loud cry for the mission of the Church to be loosed in the world today. I can only pray that more and more find inspiration and motivation through these pages as I have.

Jennifer says

Our religious culture is a consumer culture. Whether through worship services or other church activities, most Christians are spectators rather than an integral part of the action. Brandon Hatmaker, senior pastor of the Austin New Church and co-founder of Missio, wants to change all that. In *Barefoot Church: Servicing the Least in a Consumer Culture* (Zondervan, 2011), he reminds us that, in the words of James, pure religion requires serving the poor and oppressed, not sitting on the sidelines a few times a week expecting to be entertained. Hatmaker wants to get every member of every church involved in community service projects,

which unfortunately have taken a backseat to evangelism.

There's a backlash against this view primarily because church leaders tend to fear "social gospel," the preaching and teaching that society can be saved through prohibition, soup kitchens, and improved sanitation, rather than through Jesus Christ. This isn't what Hatmaker's promoting. He's calling Christians to return service to its rightful place beside the proclamation of the Gospel. He's looking for barefoot Christians, those willing to give up their shoes for the homeless on the spot, regardless of whether or not there's an opportunity to convert them.

Right now, churches direct most of their resources to "getting people in the door." This method has failed to produce the kind of growth expected. The "unchurched" don't have their material needs met, and the "dechurched" have left because church, as church is usually done, appears irrelevant to the real world. The solution? Hatmaker advocates a major structural overhaul. His most controversial suggestion? Canceling morning worship service once a month so that the congregation can go out and actually meet the needs of the community.

When a church's priorities change, Hatmaker foresees real progress being made. Why obsess over attendance counts when there are orphans to adopt and sex trafficking victims to rehabilitate? And what about partnering with other organizations to give Christians an opportunity to connect with those demographics underrepresented in church, like college professors? The refusal to do so, he points out, is often connected with an unwillingness to set aside some church agenda to get a service job done. In addition, churches crave public recognition for their work, pitting them against nonprofit organizations as competition instead of allies with common goals.

I enjoyed *Barefoot Church* largely because it got straight to the point. Yes, there were plenty of stories to illustrate the problem at hand along with Bible verses to convince the reader of the necessity of service, but Hatmaker focuses on the logistics of getting a program set up without burning out leaders or guilt tripping members who don't have time. One area he doesn't touch upon nearly enough is conflict within a congregation. Breaking away from the norm will likely cause division. Hatmaker sort of assumes that his readers are working within an autocratic system in which a senior pastor can create new projects and change church structure at whim. However, those coming from situations tightly controlled by the congregation, a team of elders, or a denominational authority need more advice on how to win over others. Yes, the church should make service a priority, but for small congregations especially, everyone needs to be on board with the idea.

P.S. Hatmaker also has written the *Barefoot Church Primer: An 8-week Guide to Serving through Community* to help churches get started.

Nate Polsfut says

I have read/listened (audio book) this book numerous times. It honestly has changed my life. Hatmaker challenges readers stop being cynical dreamers and take the risk of living life with purpose.

Highly recommend to readers that are sick of living critical and/or stagnant Christian life.

Jennifer Davis says

An amazing book that lays it all down. Love God and Love others.
