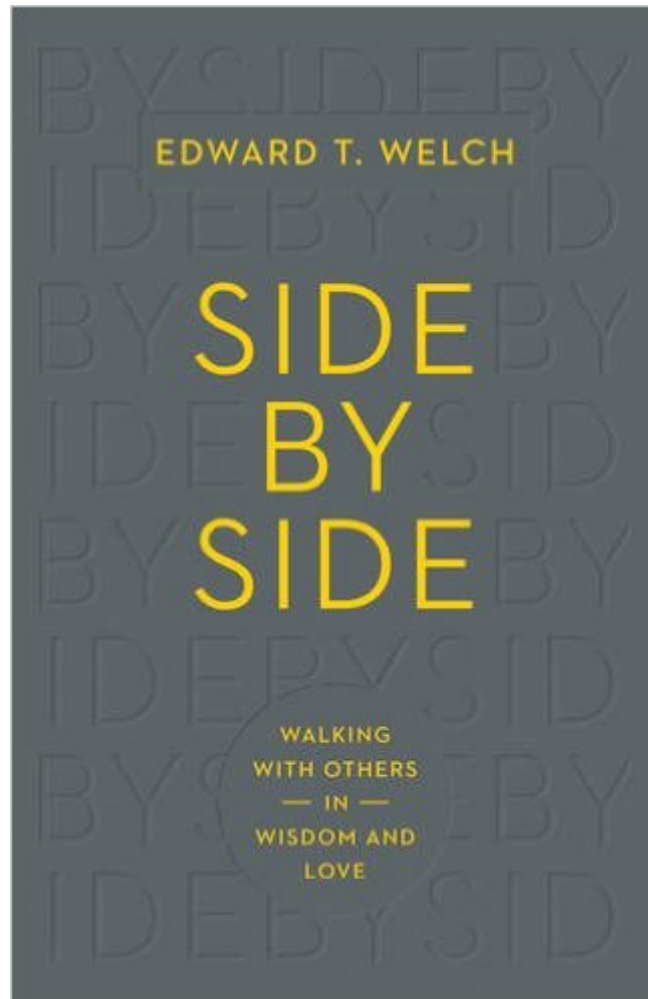


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# Side By Side: Walking With Others In Wisdom And Love



## Synopsis

Practical Guidance for Loving Others Well Everyone needs help from time to time, especially in the midst of painful circumstances and difficult trials. In this short book, a highly respected biblical counselor and successful author offers practical guidance for all Christians—pastors and laypeople alike—who want to develop their helping skills • when it comes to walking alongside hurting people. Written out of the conviction that friends are the best helpers, this accessible introduction to biblical counseling will equip believers to share their burdens with one another through gentle words of wisdom and kind acts of love. This book is written for those eager to see God use ordinary relationships and conversations between ordinary Christians to work extraordinary miracles in the lives of his people.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sometimes I read a book and think, “If we all just got this, the church would be so much stronger. If we all just did these things, the church would be so much better.” And Ed Welch’s new book *Side by Side* is exactly that kind of book. If we could all just agree to do these things, the church would be immeasurably blessed. *Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love* is practical advice for Christians on how they can live lives of love for others. Welch begins with the observation and assumption that “God is pleased to use ordinary people, ordinary conversations, and extraordinary and wise love to do the heavy lifting in his kingdom.” In an age of experts and specialization, we need to remember and believe that the work of the ministry is still assigned to all of us—to ordinary Christians. “We were meant to walk side by side, an interdependent body of weak people. God is pleased to grow and

change us through the help of people who have been re-created in Christ and empowered by the Spirit. This is how life in the church works. What keeps us from doing this with joy and confidence? At least two things: the idea that such work is best left to experts, and our own pride. But in most cases simple friendship trumps expertise. In our era we consult experts, professionals, and specialists, but when you look at your own history of having been helped, it's likely that you'll notice very few experts among those who have helped you. Who were your helpers? Were they professional counselors or specialists? Probably not. More often they were friends—the regular, everyday people in your life. Friends are the best helpers. They come prepackaged with compassion and love. All they need is wisdom, and that is available to everyone. This is not to say that there is no room for specialized pastors or counselors (since Ed Welch is, himself, a counselor), but that we are not dependent upon such people. Far more of the help we receive in love comes through ordinary Christians than through trained experts. If the first hindrance to this kind of life is a misplaced emphasis on expertise, the second is pride. Pride convinces us that we need to be strong, that we cannot ask for help from others. Yet weakness or neediness is a valuable asset in God's community. Jesus introduced a new era in which weakness is the new strength. Anything that reminds us that we are dependent on God and other people is a good thing. Otherwise, we trick ourselves into thinking that we are self-sufficient, and arrogance is sure to follow. We need help, and God has given us his Spirit and each other to provide it. When we let go of pride we invite others into our struggles; when we let go of the idolatry of expertise, we allow ourselves into other people's struggles. And this is exactly what God wants us to be—ordinary people who minister his extraordinary Word to others. Welch says he has written this book for people like me, who are willing to move toward other struggling people but are not confident that they can say or do anything very helpful. If you feel quite weak and ordinary—if you feel like a mess but have the Spirit—you have the right credentials. You are one of the ordinary people God uses to help others. Not only that, but your neediness is the very thing that qualifies you to help others. Your neediness, offered well to someone else, can even be one of the great gifts you give your church. You will inspire others to ask for help. Side by Side is simply a collection of practical instructions on extending and inviting the kind of help we all need as we live lives like these in a world like this. It is ultra-practical and ultra-biblical, and, as I said at the outset, if we just chose to do these things, our churches would be better and stronger for it. I appreciate what Heath Lambert says in his commendation: This book will help you to know what the love of Christ looks like, how to extend it to others, and how to accept it from others as you live in relationship

together. What could be better than that?

When I was first introduced to Jay Adams' powerful polemic "Competent to Counsel" my world changed. The idea, the reality, of soul problems rightly falling into the domain of the Church and other Believers not only made sense to me, Adams demonstrated Biblically why it was so. And thus the Biblical Counselling Movement took off with its impulse engine's force. Not only did I read Adams as much as I could, I branched out into others, before the "Counselling Wars" began that is. Larry Crabb. Wayne Mack. Gary Smalley. Lou Priolo. Minnereth & Meyers. Paul David Tripp. Henry Cloud. Elyse Fitzpatrick, John Townsend. David Powlison, and even Puritans like Richard Baxter who wrote copious volumes. On and on the list is endless. And I gobbled up literally dozens. One thing began to agitate within me however. Before long, Biblical counselling soon moved away from existing in the province of the Church, as part and parcel of the local Church Body acting Biblically and in love with one another, into its own school of professionalism. Soon, Biblical Counselling was as intricate and professional IN the Church, as Psychological counselling was outside of the Church. Now there were more intense and specialized curricula. Certification and degree programs abounded. And it seemed like every Church had to have "trained" Biblical counselors, and they did the counselling work "wresting it back out of the hands of Believer to Believer within the ordinary life of the Body" and into this newly created class of "Biblical Counsellors." I want to be clear here "not all of that is bad. In that the Church and the Seminaries began to more seriously and comprehensively lay out how the Bible was to be applied to more and more areas of life" we win. This is exactly what ought to be done. The danger as I began to see it was that we began to develop a caste of counselors with some sort of specialized, if not downright secret, knowledge and training. And once again, we in the pew were no longer "Competent to Counsel." Only the "professionals" were. Enter Ed Welch's breath of fresh air entitled "Side by Side." Sub-titled "Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love." BOOM!! I cannot recommend this slender but clear and powerful volume enough. What Welch has done here, is returned us to our core. He has taken us back to basics. Showing how to practically interact with one another in sound, Biblical, loving ways "that in my humble opinion, helps the local Church re-assume its role in "counselling" one another. Which in this case "rightly I believe" re-redefines (yes, that is re-redefines) counselling as "Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love." At only 176 pages, and easy to read pages at that, this book can be devoured in a very brief time. But don't let that

fool you. In an amazing economy of words Welch calls us back to be to one another what we ought to be " true Family in Christ. And in every instance gives the most clear and practical advice I've read given all of the authors above combined. Divided into two main sections, the first portion (We Are Needy) focuses upon understanding our own weakness, sinfulness and brokenness and how Christ meets those things in us. It prevents us from being the accomplished professional talking down to the needy patient or client. It puts on the proper peer-to-peer footing we really are on before the face of God. Part 2 "We Are Needed", moves to touching others out of the reality of knowing our own needs, and Christ meeting BOTH of us mutually. In love. If you only read the 13th Chapter "Pray during trouble" you will do yourself and others more practical good than you can imagine. How grateful I am the Author put so much emphasis upon, and gave so much clarity to - the practical means and role of prayer in this passage. If you read this alone you will be a better friend in godliness to your brothers and sisters in Christ than you may have ever suspected you could. Side By Side will stand alone as a handy manual on how Christians are to love one another in powerful, personal and practical terms for many years to come. By it. Read it. Employ it. And read it again. You will do your own soul much good, and be well armed to do the souls of those you love in Christ much good as well. Thank you Ed Welch. I am indebted.

Dr. Welch's book comes with a boatload of recommendations from various people, so to be slightly critical of it seems like I'm swimming against the tide. The good - the book is clear, direct, and he supports his thoughts with Scripture. He tries to give illustrations and real-life scenarios, which help aid his points. I'm not sure of the intended audience for the book, but I found much of the book to be too simple. I'm not a scholar, but as a mature Christian I found a lot of the instruction to be so practical that it seems painfully obvious. There's some pearls of wisdom to be found and definitely some good reminders, but I found myself wishing for a little more.

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