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# Endorsements

## *Maximize! Leveraging the Strengths of Your Small Church*

Ron Klassen has been a winsome and tireless encourager of small-place pastors and churches for decades. In this book, he draws on years of study and experience in order to help those who are part of small churches see that there are many advantages to smaller gospel communities. I was repeatedly encouraged and challenged as I read. This is a hopeful, positive, practical, and very encouraging book.

Stephen Witmer

Pastor, Pepperell (Massachusetts) Christian Fellowship; co-founder, The Gospel Coalition's Small Town Summits; author of *A Big Gospel in Small Places*

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There are healthy large churches and healthy smaller churches. There are also unhealthy examples of each. Yet it is true that although the vast majority of churches are small, the largest churches typically provide the examples we see expressed for effective ministry. Ron Klassen, a longtime advocate for small and rural churches, shows the hope we have in the small church by describing what a healthy small church looks like, what effective preaching sounds like, and what relational Christianity could be like when lived out in the context of a small church. It's an excellent book and worth your time!

Ed Stetzer

Executive Director, Billy Graham Center for Evangelism, home of the Rural Matters Institute; author of *Planting Missional Churches*

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Ron Klassen's little book, *Maximize!*, is a goldmine! He draws on Scripture that speaks perfectly to the insecurities of small church leaders. His practical insights and ideas are drawn from years of conversations and observations about small churches. His writing is vivid and succinct. Klassen isn't just a cheerleader, he is a skilled, wise coach. I guarantee you will be helped!

Lee Eclov

Retired pastor; grew up in a small South Dakota church; author of *Pastoral Graces: Reflections on the Care of Souls* and weekly columns for *PreachingToday.com*

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In *Maximize!*, Ron Klassen has written a book about the value of small-church ministry that is deeply biblical, solidly practical, and eminently relatable. While reading it I found myself responding in two ways on a regular basis: nodding my head while thinking, "Yep, he gets what it's like," and then wrinkling my brow while wondering, "How did I not see that before?" The second response is especially true in the simple, yet profound ways that Ron unpacks biblical principles. If you serve in a small church, or if you serve small-church pastors, this book is required reading.

Karl Vaters

Longtime small-church pastor, Cornerstone Christian Fellowship (Fountain Valley, California); founder, *NewSmallChurch.com*; author of *Small Church Essentials*

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Ron Klassen has spent a lifetime of ministry developing the vision of a big God and significant ministry in settings of smaller towns and churches. Size should never be confused with the Spirit. Programming should never eclipse maturing people. With a combination of good theology and practical method this is a guide to creatively "exploit" the unique opportunities in those smaller settings for maximum impact. This book is a real gift, and Ron was the right one to write it.

Mark Bailey

Chancellor and Sr. Professor of Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary; author of *To Follow Him: The Seven Marks of a Disciple*

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I eagerly agreed to endorse this book because I deeply respect and admire my friend Ron Klassen. He's a profound thinker and a clear communicator. Then I read the book. All of it. In one night. I absorbed Ron's words like rain on my parched spirit which I didn't even know was dry. It turned out I desperately needed this book. This book showed me how to align my beliefs with God's nature and revelation. It will help me lead with greater courage and conviction because I see God and myself more clearly. Don't be surprised if God surprises you like He did me. Even more than a book about small-church ministry, this is a book about our gigantic God and the huge opportunity you and I have to glorify Him as we serve the people He loves.

Phil Tuttle

President, Walk Thru the Bible; former small-church pastor; author of *Crucible: The Choices that Change Your Life Forever*

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For many years I've had the concern that small churches don't appreciate both the good they already have done and their potential. That's why I was so excited to read this book. Ron nailed it! Every small church pastor and leader should read this book, both for encouragement and for the valuable tips that will help maximize (or "exploit") the strengths of their small church. Reminding us of and encouraging us that the small church is all about relationships, Ron believes (as do I) that the small church is the best size for discipleship, and this occurs within the rich soil of intergenerational relationships. This book will be a rich resource for

those thinking of small-church ministry and those already embarked upon what can be a rewarding and blessed ministry.

Brian Wechsler

Director Emeritus, Village Missions; former long-time small-town and small-church pastor

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Ron is a proven leader and authority on rural church ministry. His previous book, *No Little Places*, is widely regarded as one of the leading books on rural ministry. His latest book, *Maximize! Leveraging the Strengths of Your Small Church*, is likewise an essential book for every pastor. It provides invaluable insight into how the size of the small church is not a hindrance but a springboard for effective ministry. I highly recommend anything that Ron has written and especially this new addition to the growing literature on the rural church.

Glenn Daman

Longtime rural pastor, River Christian Church (Stevenson, Washington); author of *The Forgotten Church*

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Ron Klassen and I are ministry partners, and we've done small-town ministry together in a number of contexts over the years. I love his heart for pastors and churches in places many others overlook. In this book, Ron will help you discover how to exploit, not downplay or excuse, your strengths as a small church. This is a must-read primer for anyone involved in small-church ministry. Read this book and learn vital principles that are crucial for small-church ministry!

Les Lofquist

Professor, Shepherds Seminary; former Executive Director of IFCA International; grew up in a small Minnesota town; former small-town church planter; author of many church-related articles