

Book Reviews: Sacred Rhythms


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[Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation](#)
by Ruth Haley Barton (InterVarsity)

Blessed is the person who has some voice in her or his life saying what Ruth Haley Barton says. I am very aware many of the books I buy are ministry-related and even how-to ministry books. *Sacred Rhythms* speaks instead to a person's spiritual life.

Barton does more than remind people not to neglect the spiritual disciplines; she guides them toward spiritual reflection and instructs through "practice" sections at the end of each chapter.

She speaks personally about her experiences on various occasions. My experience with this book is that on occasion she generalizes so far as to suppose her readers feel the same way in those circumstances—or that our longings are similar. I fully believe I experience things differently as a different gender and most especially a different personality. The things she longs for, her experiences in solitude, and then her service preferences are not normative for each Christian.

Still, *Sacred Rhythms* is a book I have treasured. Our church even used the process described as Lectio Divina—sacred writing—in a reflection about Good Friday. The Baptist seminary classes of another day did not expose me to the literature of historical Christian reflection. I am probably more able to appreciate it now, anyway. I find Barton's work helpful, integrating some of those processes for personal devotional reflection. 

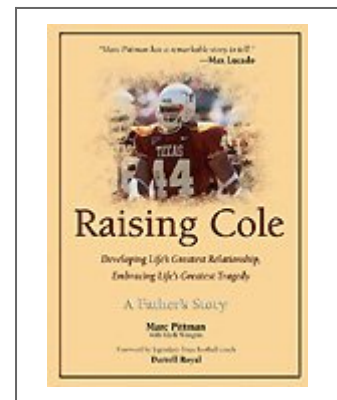
Trey Turner, pastor

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***Raising Cole: Developing Life's Greatest Relationship, Embracing Life's Greatest Tragedy* by Marc Pittman with Mark Wangrin (Health Communications)**

Raising Cole is the true account of a father's love for his sons and the tragedy of losing one of them early in life. Pittman is the owner of a construction firm, and by his own account is a huge man. Likewise, his sons grew to be big, strong men, but they never allowed their masculinity to stop them from openly showing affection for one another.



Pittman's story, however, doesn't start with his role as a father but as a son. His father was anything but affectionate, and early in his son's life, he followed that same path. *Raising Cole* recounts his walk toward an open and extremely deep, loving relationship with his sons.

His son whose name rests in the title, Cole, was a lineman at the University of Texas. Cole had a bright and promising future when he fell asleep on his way back to campus from home and died in an automobile accident.

The book's more poignant moments are Pittman's response to his son's birth and death.

My favorite chapter was "God Shows Up." Pittman admits it is the presence of God—not his own strength—that has allowed him to continue these years following Cole's death.

Pittman also states that though years have passed, he still grieves for his son. His grief finds solace in ways I admit I don't fully understand, but then I've never lost a son.

While this book may be of help to those who have lost a child, I think it may hold more value for those whose children are still with them, especially men who may be reluctant to be open with their affection.

George Henson, staff writer

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