What is an ideal church, and how can you tell?

How does it look different from other churches? More importantly, how does it act differently, especially in society? Many of us aren't sure how to answer those questions, even though we probably have some preconceived idea. But with this book, you don't have to wonder any more.

Author Mark Dever seeks to help believers recognize the key characteristics of a healthy church: expositional preaching, biblical theology, and a right understanding of the gospel. Dever then calls us to develop those characteristics in our own churches. By following the example of New Testament authors and addressing church members from pastors to pew sitters, Dever challenges all believers to do their part in maintaining the local church. What Is a Healthy Church? offers timeless truths and practical principles to help each of us fulfill our God-given roles in the body of Christ.

Features:
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My Personal Review:
Take Mark Dever's The Deliberate Church and 9 Marks of a Healthy Church, condense them down to their core ideas, and you have What is a Healthy Church? This small book (128 pages) published by Crossway serves as a splendid introduction to Dever's practical insights into the reformation of the evangelical church.

What is a Healthy Church is divided into three sections. The first focuses on the biblical vision of church - a people, not a place - a family, a fellowship, a body - and the people through whom God's glory is most
brilliantly displayed. Dever emphasizes the importance of commitment, church membership, and theological integrity.

The second section lists three essential marks of a church. These are the marks that Dever claims must never be compromised. He considers expositional preaching, biblical theology, and a biblical understanding of the gospel as the three core elements that are essential to church health.

The third section lists six other marks of a healthy church (though he calls these "important" rather than "essential."). These marks are a biblical understanding of conversion, of evangelism, of membership, biblical church discipline, discipleship and growth, as well as biblical leadership.

Dever warns his readers to not abandon weak or struggling churches and their ministries too quickly. He offers "quick tips" for those who consider leaving their church. His tips include prayer, motivation-checking, reconciliation, and an emphasis on humility. Dever also gives sound advice to those who do leave a church, passionately pleading for unity and forgiveness instead of schism and heartache.

Throughout the book, Dever weaves personal testimony and memorable illustrations into the text in order to elucidate his argument and to keep the book light and practical. Though Dever makes some weighty statements, this book can be read quickly and with relative ease. Busy pastors might be inclined to pick this book up before trying Dever's other, longer works.