

Rise Up

A Call to Leadership for African American Women, by Sylvia Rose

REVIEWED BY M. ALEXANDRA GEORGE | I applaud Sylvia Rose for writing an impassioned plea for African American women to step forward, *rise up*, and take leadership in the world. One challenge I had in reading this book was identifying the intended audience. It seems most likely to appeal to African American women who are well-educated or in the church already. But I believe Rose's message is valuable for readers with a broad range of education and church experiences.

Rise Up is primarily about African American women discovering their capacity to lead, whether in large or small ways. In the introduction, Rose gives a wake-up call to African American women, claiming that there is a crisis in church leadership and African American women need to step up into those roles. Her case could have been strengthened by the addition of a few statistics, like the percentage of African American women today that are lawyers, doctors, teachers, heads of households, etc., so that readers would have a starting point for reflection. Still, she is right.

Rose reminds us that African American women often undermine themselves by thinking they don't have the ability or the authority to lead. She writes, "There will always be times when those who think you are not the one to be in the position of authority and leadership will challenge you. It is then that you must remind yourself of who you are and what you have done in the past to prepare you for the conflict and challenge that you presently endure" (pg. 48).

Biblical images scattered throughout help the reader connect the concepts of preparation, challenge, and endurance with leadership. The questions at the end of each chapter will also generate discussion about African American women and leadership, both in the Church and in other contexts.

If after reading this book, the question, "Why should African American women lead?" remains, then the answer is clearly stated toward the end: "The bottom line is that we must accept a greater responsibility for the leadership in our communities. And there are two basic reasons why we should: because we care and because we can" (pg. 134). We know our immediate familial and biblical roots and from that basis, we can lead.

Because of the way this book is designed and the message it promotes, it is my hope that *Rise Up* will make its way into diverse communities of African American women. I would recommend this book to intergenerational church groups, such as Bible studies, that could more thoroughly explore the biblical images within each chapter. I would also recommend this book to groups of young African American women in high school or college settings, especially as they begin to take on leadership roles.

Beyond these circles, this book sheds light on African American women's experiences for all people to appreciate. Since the concepts and examples cross cultures, I would recommend this book to any group interested in exploring multicultural experiences and enhancing their study and appreciation of women in leadership from different ethnic experiences.

As participants in our world community and in the Christian community, this book charges African American women with the responsibility to model Christ's care for others. Now it is time to dig deeper into our roots and, with this book, to discover the leaders we have within us—because we care and we can. ♦

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Do you hear the call to lead?

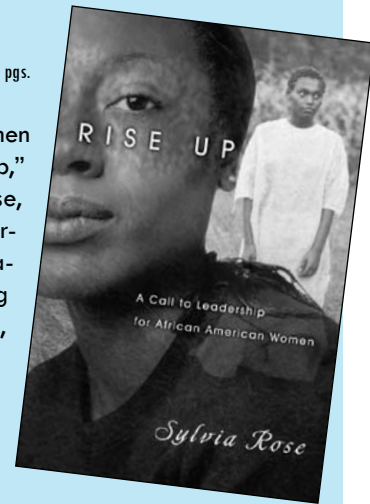
Rise Up: A Call to Leadership for African American Women

By Sylvia Rose
InterVarsity Press • paperback • 144 pgs.

"The world needs women to stand in leadership," writes Sylvia Rose, "black women in particular....This generation needs something that our lives contain, and we must answer their call."

God calls all of us to serve with our gifts. As we follow God into leadership, we will need new skills. Drawing on her own rich experience as well as the experience of others, Sylvia Rose shows us the way through some of the challenges, such as facing crisis, acting with courage, and listening to your conscience.

Are you ready to follow God even into leadership? It will be the greatest challenge and the most thrilling opportunity of your life.



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