

***Different by Design: God's Blueprint for Men and Women* by Carrie Sandom (Christian Focus Publications, 2012) Review by Caroline Freitag, Sydney, June 2012.**

The confusion of the roles of men and women has never been more great than in recent years when words like 'equality,' 'diversity,' 'unity,' and 'order' have been tossed back and forth between all sides to defend the 'what' and 'what-nots' of gender roles and relationships in society. In her book *Different by Design - God's Blueprint for Men and Women*, author Carrie Sandom aims to give a Biblical perspective on God's design for men and women and the implications for this in the home, workplace and church. Using practical illustrations and Bible references, Sandom clearly shows why God's differences in his design of men and women provide the best way for men and women to live in society today.

Sandom attributes this confusion in society to the rise of feminism in the 1960s (including the availability of the Pill) and increased equality in the workforce, which in itself is not bad, however:

“collectively, they have had a huge impact on families, on society, and perhaps, most crucially, on men themselves.” (Sandom, 2012, p12)

It is with this premise that Sandom opens up the Scriptures to give a Biblical understanding of God's design for men and women and especially their differing roles in the home, workplace and church. Sandom argues her points from a complementarian position but also outlines the views of the egalitarian left and the domineering right. The book includes large excerpts from the Bible, which allows the reader to discern whether or not they agree with Sandom's position.

Sandom writes this book in a simple, conversational style, which makes it a useful resource to give to people who are just starting to investigate the implications of God's design for men and women. Sandom gives a good overview of the key Bible passages on this issue as well as the general complementarian position. People who have already spent much time thinking through this topic will probably not gain much more understanding of this topic from reading Sandom's book, however Sandom does make some perceptive observations on some less obvious consequences of feminism in the church. In a surprising twist, this book clearly declares the grace, mercy and love of God as shown through the work of Jesus Christ in dying on the cross to bring new life to all who trust in him. This book may well turn out to be more beneficial as an evangelistic tool than an in-depth study of gender roles in the Bible.