

Books in Review

Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in their Cultural Setting

by Robert Banks

Today many Christian believers participate in one of the thousands of house churches that have come into existence throughout the world in the last quarter of a century. Most of these were formed in an effort to pattern themselves after the original house churches of the first century and/or because of conflicts within hierarchical structures of other churches. Similar arrangements, however, exist even within traditional churches and include home Bible study fellowships or prayer meetings. Anyone involved in such home fellowships, or interested in how the first century church operated, would benefit from Robert Banks' book *Paul's Idea of Community*. This thoroughly researched book sets forth in great detail how the original house churches of biblical times functioned within the cultures and

societies of the first century. It is a biblical presentation of the "ekklesia" - the household gathering of believers.

Banks offers an invaluable guide to the reasons for the original house churches' vitality and effectiveness. And though Banks is a highly regarded biblical scholar, this book is very readable and without technical language or cumbersome footnotes. It is, however, well documented with numerous scripture references so that the reader can check things out for him or herself. Chapter titles include among others: "The Social and Religious Setting;" "The Arrival of Radical Freedom;" "Church as Household Gathering;" "The Community as a Loving Family;" and "Unity in Diversity Among the Members."

I highly recommend this book - from cover to cover - for all who are interested in this important subject.

[[Click here](#) for the link to this book on Amazon.com]