

Does It Make A Difference? (Kent Heaton)

There are some things in life that have little impact in their actions. Many things in life are important to where it does make a difference in how a person views the matter. If a person does not think it matters what type of medicine to take, their indifference could be a decision of life or death. When people are indifferent about the laws of the land - laws of the road, for example - their indifference could cause much harm.

When a chef desires to make a certain dish, following the instructions is imperative to a successful result. If the ingredients call for two egg whites and indifference leaves this part of the recipe out, the result will not be what is desired. A builder is asked to build a certain type of house and given plans to follow to create the desired look. If the builder is indifferent to the construction of the house, the structure could fall or be less than expected from the owner.

A simple illustration will show how important it is to follow the exact instructions of what is established as the rule. The keyboard used to type these words is similar to every other keyboard of its kind. A typist learns first where to place the fingers in order to achieve the final result. If I decide to be indifferent about where I place my hands to type, the following will result: [Fpr Gpd sp ;pved tje wpr;d tjat je gave jos pm;u begpttem spm/] This should have read, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son." (John 3:16) Does it make a difference?

God told Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:16-17, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Did it make a difference if they obeyed?

Noah was told to build an ark out of gopher wood to specific dimensions and to place certain animals inside for safety. (Genesis 6 & 7) Did it make a difference if he obeyed or not? Naaman was given instructions by Elisha to dip seven times in the Jordan river to heal him of his leprosy. He complained angrily, "Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" (2 Kings 5:12) Did it make a difference where he dipped to be clean of his leprosy?

The description of the New Testament church is outlined in very clear terms. The founder and builder is Jesus Christ. (Matthew 16:18) In fulfillment of prophecy, the church of Jesus Christ was founded in the city of Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:3; Acts 2:5,47) Christ is the only head of the church as no man takes that rule. (Ephesians 1:22)

The organization of the New Testament church is made up of men called Elders who shepherd the local church as given to them by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 14:23; 20:17,28; 1 Peter 5:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-16) Deacons are men who have a special role in the work of the church to carry out various duties in the work of the Lord. (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13) Evangelists and members are an important part of the work as

they submit themselves to the rule of the elders. (Acts 2:41-47; Romans 12:4-5; Hebrews 13:17; 2 Timothy 4:1-5)

The names of the church as described in the New Testament are "church of God" (1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 20:28), "churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16), "house of God" (1 Timothy 3:15), "church of the firstborn" (Hebrews 12:23). The followers of Christ were simply called "Christians" (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16), "disciples" (Acts 11:26; 20:7), "saints" (1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 1:7; Philippians 1:1) and "brethren" (Galatians 6:1; 1 Corinthians 15:1,3,22,36)

The worship of the New Testament church was singing (Ephesians 5:19), praying (1 Thessalonians 5:17), teaching (Acts 20:7), communion (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29) and giving (1 Corinthians 16:2).

The creed they followed was Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Matthew 16:16-18), the rule of faith was the word of God (2 Timothy 3:16,17; Romans 1:16; 2 Peter 1:3), they practiced unity (John 17:20,21; Ephesians 4:3-6; 1 Corinthians 1:10), and their mission was only the saving of souls (Ephesians 3:10; John 6:45; 1 Timothy 4:16).

Membership into the New Testament church was through Faith, Repentance, Confession and Baptism. (Hebrews 11:6; Luke 13:3; Romans 10:10; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Romans 6:1-14; 1 Peter 3:21)

Does the church you belong to fit the description as shown above? If not, you are not in the church of the New Testament. Does it make a difference which church you belong to? It makes an eternal difference! Your soul salvation depends on the decision you make - does it fit the description and does it make a difference?