

Leave Us Alone!

Scripture Reading — Acts 5:17-39

"Leave these men alone! ... You [may] only find yourselves fighting against God." Acts 5:38-39 —

Few of us like change. We like the stability of routines. We like doing things the way we're used to doing them. In religion this is often called tradition.

For the Jewish leaders, doing things by tradition meant following God's law as taught by certain teachers. They rejected Jesus and had him killed because he didn't fit their definition of the promised Messiah. Now they were thinking they should also arrest and kill all of Jesus' disciples. But Gamaliel, a wise teacher of the law, warned the others of the danger of extremism. What if this new messianic movement was from God? Wouldn't the Jewish leaders be running the risk of fighting against God?

We face similar questions when called to change in our churches today. Many of us tend to think that change results in unfaithfulness to tradition. But it can be good to look carefully at new insights and practices. For example, should we raise our hands during worship? What musical instruments and styles should we use? What strategies should we use for witnessing?

"New" practices are fine as long as they do not contradict the Bible. We know an interpretation of Scripture is acceptable if it does not contradict Scripture--even if different from our tradition. Scripture always remains the final voice in the life of the church.

Prayer

Lord, give me a faithful but open mind so that I may follow the leading of your Spirit in my life. Show me what is important as I seek to serve you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Devotion topics: [Bible](#), [Books of the Bible](#), [Acts](#)

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