

Follow the Pattern

Dub McClish

Are those who attempt to serve Christ bound to any sort of pattern in their service? The overwhelming answer of millions of sincere people is "NO." Most of those who profess any degree of allegiance to Jesus believe each person has an almost unlimited freedom to choose his own doctrines and practices. Almost all labor under the devilish heresy that "it makes no difference what you believe (after you initially believe, of course) as long as you are sincere."

True preachers of God have through the centuries contended that God has a pattern for His followers in both word and deed. They still do because God still has such a pattern. God had a pattern for Noah by which the ark was made (Gen. 6:14-16). Noah could not have pleased God had he departed from His pattern for the ark. Moses was not only given a pattern for the tabernacle in Mt. Sinai in great detail but was cautioned to follow that pattern carefully (Exo. 25:40). God also had a pattern of doctrine in the Old Testament. Moses warned Israel, "Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the Commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you" (Deu. 4:2). But the features of the law were only typical of the Gospel, inferior to the Gospel and preparatory to the Gospel (Heb. 9:23; 8:6-7; Gal. 3:24). Does it make sense that God would be very concerned about men's following His pattern in the inferior system, but unconcerned about the superior? Hardly.

It is just as certain that God has a pattern that men must follow for His church as that He had a pattern for the tabernacle under Moses. As Moses was strictly charged to build the tabernacle "according to the pattern," so that glorious, heavenly institution, of which the tabernacle was but typical, must be made according to the New Testament pattern (Heb. 8:5). If men can ever see this fundamental Truth it will forever end denominationalism, perversions of baptism, addition of unauthorized practices such as instrumental music, and a host of other departures from the pattern.

Yes, God still has a doctrinal pattern for His people: "Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me" (2 Tim. 1:13). Doctrine is important! It makes a difference to God what one believes! To please God, we must follow the pattern.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, April 30, 1987, of which I was editor.]

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