*“Life is change.*

 *Growth is optional.”*

*–Karen Kaiser Clark*

**Lessons on responsible decision making from the Church in Jerusalem (Acts 15)**

vv. 5, 6 (ESV) But some. . . who belonged to the . . . Pharisees rose up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.” The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter.

Vv. 13, 19 After they finished speaking, James replied, “Brothers, listen to me. . . Therefore, my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God. . .”

vv. 22, 23 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch. . . with the following letter. . .

V. 30 So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter.

What happened here?

***The leadership takes counsel on a key issue.***

The Apostles never pulled rank on the elders, nor dictate to a local church. They convened with local church leaders to craft a solution.

***The issue is summarized and presented.***

Everyone can’t see and hear everything, but a trusted leader, here, James, carefully reviews the facts and proposes action.

***The resolution was decisive and public.***

The whole church is involved (owns) the solution and acts on the outcome.

How do we apply these principles to ourselves?

***We speak up as well as listen.***

Communication is a two-way street, and we must listen well to speak well.

***We act as well as talk.***

We work together lovingly to fulfill the church’s vision, not “tribally” like the world.

***We trust as well as act.***

Trust should track character, not personality. Churches are diverse, and we don’t write others off just for disagreement!

***We keep the main thing as the main thing.***

*It’s easy for churches to get distracted when Jesus and His Kingdom are not in view.*