

SEVEN CHOSEN TO SERVE -- ACTS 6:1-7

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Monday 7:30pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by doughnut/vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: <http://www.missioncalvary.com/> Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by Pastor Chuck Smith, David Hocking, John Stott, Vernon McGee, Warren Wiersbe and others.

Act 5:42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

THE REASONS FOR LEADERSHIP – Acts 6:1-2, 4

Act 6:1 Now in those days,

when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the

Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.

Act 6:2 Then the twelve summoned the multitude

of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.

Act 6:3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from

among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;

Act 6:4 but we will give ourselves continually

to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

THE REASONS FOR LEADERSHIP – Acts 6:1-2, 4

Disciples increasing!

Widows were being overlooked or neglected!

The apostles were neglecting the teaching of the Word!

v. 1 "Now" - Greek - "de" – "but" – cf - Acts 5:42

In the midst of God's blessing, there were problems to face!

v. 1 "when the number of the disciples was multiplying – Growth! The disciples were multiplying – Acts 6:1 - The number was near 20,000 – 25, 000

v. 1 "because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Murmuring!- The widows were being overlooked or neglected – Acts 6:1- cf - Acts 9:39, 41; 1 Timothy 5:3-10, 16; James 1:27 The problem was language – Hellenists – "to speak Greek"

v. 2 "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. – Taken away from teaching/preaching! - The Word of God was being neglected – Acts 6:2, 4 Greek - "diakoneo" – "serve tables" – not money, but food – it was done "daily."

v. 3 "seek out" – (episkeptomai) – to inspect, to select, -later form – "episkopeo"; to visit - cf. Mt. 25:36, 43; James 1:27; Acts 15:36

v. 3 "of good reputation" cf. - Acts. 11:30; 15:22, 32

v. 4 "to prayer and to the ministry of the word." - This is also the same word (diakoneo) when it says in Acts 6:4 - "ministry of the Word"

"THE NEED FOR LEADERSHIP" - Acts 6:1-7 – borne out of need!

- THE REASONS FOR LEADERSHIP – Acts 6:1-2, 4
- THE REQUIREMENTS FOR LEADERSHIP – Acts 6:3, 5-6
- THE RESULTS OF LEADERSHIP – Acts 6:7

Here in the beginning of chapter 6, we see the third attempt by Satan to destroy the church! It may be the cleverest attack yet – more devious than persecution or corruption!

Now here we have distraction—a COMPLAINT! If the apostles could be distracted by being preoccupied with social administration, which though essential, was not their calling, they would neglect their God-given responsibilities to pray and to preach, and so leave the church without any defense against false doctrine!

Oh, how typical is this problem all around the world in the church today!

But we have a great example here of the reasons and requirements for leadership!

Why was it so difficult for widows in the Jewish society at that time?

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THE REQUIREMENTS FOR LEADERSHIP – Acts 6:3, 5-6

Act 6:3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men

of good reputation,

full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom,

whom we may appoint over this business;

Act 6:4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR LEADERSHIP – Acts 6:3, 5-6

As to INITIAL ACCEPTANCE – Acts 6:3

v. 3 “seek out from among you - – “episkepsasthe” – to select -later form – “episkopeo” – “to look upon” – means “to seek out carefully or diligently.” Also means “to pay a visit” – Matt. 25:36, 43; James 1:27; Acts 15:36

The Number “seven”:

1. 7000
 2. 7 churches
 3. Perfect number of Jews
 4. Jews believed in 7 archangels
 5. less than 12 – subordinate to the apostles
 6. 7 days of the week – one for each day of the week?
- *By Acts 15:22, 32 - there are more elders

v. 3 “of good reputation” – “marturomenous”

Continually being witnessed or observed - cf - 1 Timothy 5:22 - Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thus share - responsibility for the sins of others”

v. 3 “ full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom - As to PERSONAL ABILITIES

Stephen – the ability to trust God in different circumstances – Hebrews 11

v. 3 “whom we may appoint over this business”; - As to the SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY – Acts 6:3, 6- “put in charge of this task – “chreias”

We see here the requirements for leadership are:

- Initially acceptance by the apostles AND the brethren consisting of GOOD REPUTATION!
- PERSONAL ABILITIES of being full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom!
- A need for congregational approval
- SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY: Acts 6:6 whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, (they looked to God for their authority) they laid hands on them.

Note the requirements for leadership!

- A good reputation!
- Full of the holy spirit!
- Full of wisdom!
- Full of faith!

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OBSERVATION

Act 6:5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch,

Act 6:6 whom they set before the apostles; and

when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.

THE RESULTS OF LEADERSHIP – Acts 6:7

Act 6:7 Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem,

and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

INTERPRETATION

v. 5 “pleased the whole multitude. And they chose” – As to CONGREGATIONAL APPROVAL - “exeleksanto” – aorist middle – “to elect or select out of ...for themselves”

*All seven names are Greek, but does not mean they were all Hellenists, but it does mean they could speak Greek
Two apostles had Greek names – Andrew and Philip
Nicolas – founder of Nicolaitians? – Revelation 2:6, 14
Mentioned by Iranaeus, Tertullian, Epiphartius, Jerome*

v. 6 “they set before the apostles Verse 6 – brought – “estesan” - stood before the apostles,

*v. 6 “they laid hands on them. - And after praying, they laid their hands on them - “Elders” – Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23
Moses laid hands on Joshua – Numbers 27:18-20; Deut. 34:9;
Paul laid hands on Timothy - 1 Timothy 4:14; 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:6
Acts 13:3*

THE RESULTS OF LEADERSHIP – Acts 6:7

v. 7 “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem”. As to the GROWING IMPACT of God’s Word - Imperfect tense – “continued to grow” – cf - Acts 19:17-20

v. 7 “and a great many of the priests” - As to the GREAT INCREASE in the number of believers – cf - Acts 8:4-6a; 9:42; 11:21, 24; 14:1; 16:5

Notice contrast with what Jesus told the priests in Mt. 23:14 “ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.”!!

APPLICATION

Here we see the need for the approval of everyone – the whole multitude! – The third requirement of choosing leaders! Whenever a true Biblical leader is chosen, blessings will follow!

After praying they laid their hand on them! We see the great fruitfulness of establishing good leadership in order that the word would continue to spread!

- **The result was “the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem**
- **Also a great many of the priests became believers! So unlikely candidates for salvation! Cf. Acts 18:9-10**

Are you a person of:

- **A good reputation?**
- **Full of the Holy Spirit?**
- **Full of wisdom?**
- **Full of faith?**

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		<p><u>Questions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Under what kinds of circumstances are new church leaders selected? – At a time of great problems or when everything is going well? Out of need?2. Do you think the church – the body of Christ – is an organism or an organization? (<i>1 Cor. 12:12-13</i>)3. Should there be organization in the church?4. Do you think the early church was deliberately trying to overlook the Hellenistic Jewish widows? What was the primary problem?5. Can you see Satan's third attempt here, following persecution and corruption, to destroy the church?6. Why did the widows in the early church have a particularly significant problem?7. Why do you think seven men were chosen as opposed to some other number?8. What were the significant leadership requirements for each of the seven men selected to serve tables? (v. 3)9. Why do you think that Stephen was the only one of the seven referred to as a man "full of faith"?10. Is the laying on of hands by the elders, biblical?11. What was the result of true biblical leadership? (v. 7)
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