

## Life Church Sunday June 14, 2020

### Acts Chapter 6 New International Version (NIV)

**6** In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews<sup>[a]</sup> among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. <sup>2</sup>So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. <sup>3</sup>Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them <sup>4</sup>and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

<sup>5</sup>This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. <sup>6</sup>They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

<sup>7</sup>So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

<sup>8</sup>Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. <sup>9</sup>Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. <sup>10</sup>But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

<sup>11</sup>Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, “We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.”

<sup>12</sup>So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. <sup>13</sup>They produced false witnesses, who testified, “This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. <sup>14</sup>For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.”

<sup>15</sup>All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Acts Chapter 6 – Part 2

We will not address everything in the chapter in each message but will build on what was previously covered and introduce new sections each week.

Here's a summary of what's we've covered to date:

- The number of disciples was increasing - the early church was making disciples
- Disciples do the will of God and put his word into practice
- The early church experienced growing pains marked by cultural differences
- The Jewish followers of Christ were familiar with the call to justice in the Old Testament scriptures – and they acted.
- Promote systemic justice for the poor and oppressed
- Wherever we are - seek the peace of the city.
- The stability of a country requires justice in leadership
- Sometimes faced with a false dichotomy – but we must pray and act.
- Fighting for systemic justice is not equivalent to protecting my personal pride and ego.
- The disciples in the early church spoke up about an injustice. In the body of Christ – can we talk?
- Ultimate unity is found in Christ

The Twelve – these are the apostles

The apostles focused on the ministry of the word and prayer.

This is not meant to diminish or disparage in any way the importance of waiting on tables. Rather it's meant to emphasize the necessity for the members of the body to play their appropriate roles.

The word is powerful and impactful:

- Isaiah 55:10-11

The Word shows us:

- Who God Is
- Who we are in Christ
- What our response should be

Who God Is

- Our Rock, Shield, Deliverer and Refuge – Psalm 18:2
- Loving, Compassionate and Faithful – Lamentations 3: 22-23
- Savior – Psalm 18:46
- Loving, Merciful, Kind – Ephesians 2:4-10

Who are we in Christ – Ephesians 2:4-10

- No longer dead in sin but alive in Christ
- Saved by Grace through Faith
- God's handiwork
- Created in Christ to do good works

What our response should be

- Worship Him – Psalm 29:2
- Rejoice, give thanks and pray – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
- Loving obedience to God – John 14:21
- Resist the devil - James 4:7; Ephesians 6:12
- Make disciples – Matthew 28:19

Therefore they needed to delegate the vitally important function of waiting on tables to seven men.

In order to serve in this capacity of waiting on tables, the men had to be full of the Spirit and wisdom

The congregation was responsible for choosing seven men that fit this criteria. – Galations 5:22-23

Unity was promoted – this proposal pleased the whole group  
The men that were chosen all had Greek names.

Wait on tables – derivation of the word deacons  
The seven included Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

Roles should be delegated to the appropriate people.

Discussion Questions:

- Discuss Who God Is, Who We Are In Christ and What Our Response Should Be.
- Discuss the importance of prioritizing. Discuss ways the Lord has used you or is calling you to serve in his kingdom.