

Acts 6:1-7, THE APOSTLES PRIORITIZE: THE FELLOWSHIP ORGANIZES

Context: The second chapter of *Acts* records the birth of an *Organism*, the Church, the Body of Christ. It then goes on to tell of the growth of that organism in the Roman world. It is important to note that we are talking organism here, *note an organization*. When we get to chapter 6, the *organism* is getting so complex in size and responsibility that some organization becomes necessary. So the Apostles, seeking to maintain their priorities, look within the fellowship for God's provision of male leadership and help.

The Occasion that Leads to Appointment of "Servers"

v. 1, Note 3 things in this verse:

- 1) When? "while, or 'as', the number of disciples ("believers") was increasing:" the message was still being received by the Jews in Jerusalem (this popular reception ends with the death of Stephen);
- 2) Who? the Grecians, lit. "Hellenists," that is, the Greek speaking Jewish Christians, began complaining against the Hebrews/Aramaic speaking Jewish Christians;
- 3) Why? because their widows were overlooked in the daily serving of food. NOTE: DAILY MINISTRY HAD DEVELOPED THAT INCLUDED FOOD PROCESSING & SERVING.

v. 2 & 4, The Twelve seek to maintain priorities and not get diverted: "We will devote ourselves to 1) prayer & 2) serving God's Word" (v. 4).

v. 3, The Twelve instruct the Believers:

- 1) you (pl.) as a Fellowship pick-out ("look out", KJV) seven men [the verb is Aorist Tense, Middle Voice, Imperative Mode];
- 2) the men you choose must be
 - a. "from among you," i.e., believers from your midst that you know;
 - b. "of good report," i.e., well reported of; men with good reputations;
 - c. "full ($\pi\lambda\eta\rho\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ / plereis) of the Spirit," i.e., men living the normal Christian life;
 - d. "full of wisdom," i.e., gifted in applying truth to the issue of life; men with sanctified common sense.

[Compare 1 Timothy 3:8-10 for qualifications of a Deacon, a Server.]

(OVER)

v. 5-6, The congregation chose (lit. "elected") seven men. How? NOTE: ALL SEVEN HAVE HELLENIST (GREEK) NAMES! Stephen and Philip soon emerge as leaders due to their evangelical fervor.

The Results

- v.7,**
- 1) The Word of God increased, spread, grew!
 - 2) Multitudes of Jerusalem Jews continue to get saved!
 - 3) A great number (lit. "crowd") of Jewish priests get saved!

The early church enjoyed popular favor in Jerusalem to this point, but with the death of Stephen, that diminishes. We read no more of multitudes being saved there. Remember: the Believers there are not yet called "Christians" (see Acts 11:26).

Learning from this Passage (Doctrine by Application)

- I. As a result of preaching and prioritizing God's Word, the Church grew and with the increase there came new needs, responsibilities, new care and applied thought. SO ALWAYS WITH A GROWING CHURCH!
- II. The Apostles served (διακονία / diakonia) God's Word; the appointed men were to serve (διακονεῖν / diakeonein) tables daily. NOTE THAT THE WORD "DEACON" IS NOT USED: ONLY THE CONCEPT OF SERVING OR DEACONING!
- III. The first ministry of serving tables or caring for physical needs of the fellowship is complementary to the ministry of the Word: it is no less holy.
- IV. The first act of organization in the church was designed to set those who ministered God's Word free from those things that would impinge or threaten that priority. The Apostles led with decisiveness in this matter, but let the believers choose!
- V. A great deal of organization in the church today is complex, corrupt, manipulative, and political: TRUE GROWTH OF A LOCAL ASSEMBLY IS GROWTH IN THE CAPACITY OF PROCLAIMING JESUS CHRIST! SPIRIT-LED ORGANIZATION WILL LEAD TO THAT.