

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter Six

Delegating the Work

Focus Verse: **Acts 6:3**

“Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.”

I. Study Introduction

- A. No one person can do all the work involved in the church ministry. God designed Christianity like a family, with more than just a few helping out. In God’s family, everyone pulls their weight, and more. There is not to be *welfare*, with the majority reaping the benefits of the work of the few! There needs to be delegation - the appointment of helpers, fellowlabourers, fellowservant. Not power-hungry leaders!
- B. In chapter six, God allows the church to experience some major “growing pains” in order to prepare them for greater growth, and for a further outreach than just Jerusalem!

II. Study Outline - Delegating the Work (Acts 6:1-15)

A. Reaching the Limit (6:1-2)

1. With over 15,000 new Christians, the 12 apostles were well beyond their abilities in trying to minister the word of God to people. They had become overwhelmed by handling all the donations, coordination of housing and feeding the widows. It was getting to where they had no time to teach the Scriptures. People who depended upon the Christians for food were being left out and were going hungry! They had no other source of help
2. Definitely the primary work of the Apostles was to _____ (6:2; Eph 4:20,21), and to _____ (get ability to teach)
3. But some others had to take over handling the ministrations of food, and other help. There were too many “_____” and so few “_____” in the congregation. Leads to murmuring (Cf Ex 15:24; 16:2,8; 17:3), and to big trouble - there needed to be a balance!
4. Called delegation, commission, ambassador. Examples:
 - a. _____ and his 70 elders (Ex 18:13-24)
 - b. Jesus and His 12 apostles (Mt 10:5-10)
 - c. Jesus and His 70 disciples (Luke 10:1-3)
 - d. Jesus and all of Christianity (Mt 28:19,20; 2 Cor 5:20)
 - e. The Pastor, and his Teachers (Eph 4:11,12)

B. Delegating Pastoral Responsibilities (6:3-6)

1. The inventory among the local Christians (6:3) - don’t bring-in someone from outside. Look “*among ourselves*” for:
 - a. These are the four qualifications of Godly servanthood:
 - b. Men of _____ - their character is well known
 - c. Spiritual men, _____ of the Holy Spirit - obedient to God (Acts 5:32) - doers of the word, and not hearers only (Jam 1:22)
 - d. Wise men (having wisdom; experienced). Not novices or people playing games
 - e. _____ - who will accept assignments and serve, instead of always trying to lead! These men become known as “deacons” which simply means “servants” (1 Tim 3:8,10).
 - f. All of us ought to have the desire to be these kind of Christians!
2. Resolve to keep things proper (6:4; 1Cor 14:40) - maintaining the priority tasks - the Apostles would give themselves to labouring in prayer, and in the word (1 Tim 5:17; 2 Tim 3:15)
3. Seven men are chosen (6:5)
 - a. _____ - his name means “crown”. He is well known for his faith in Christ, and being filled with the Holy Spirit. He is the primary person in Acts 7. He then gets stoned by the religious rulers!
 - b. _____ - not the Apostle by this name. He is the primary person of Acts 8 (with Samaritans getting saved, and then the eunuch). Becomes known as the “evangelist” (8:5; 21:8)
 - c. Procorus - his name means “*leader of the choir*”
 - d. Nicanor - his name means “*conqueror*” - soul-winner
 - e. Timon - his name means “*honourable*”
 - f. Parmenas - his name means “*faithful*”
 - g. Nicolas - his name means “*a conqueror of the people.*” He had first converted to Judaism, then to Christianity - and he was still fervent - many lose fervency after a few mistakes.

4. Notice **how** they were chosen. Was it “unconditional election by God?” By dictate from the apostles? Was it anarchy (people fighting to be picked)? No. It was by congressional choice - the choice of the congregation (both OT and NT truth). This is the basis of *democracy* - people chose within the limits of law.
5. Authorising the servants (6:6). The laying on of hands had no miraculous power - just authorisation to serve in the name of the Lord with the backing of the church (as with Joshua; Num 27:18). This is where maverick, and rogue Christians have the problem: ie, working _____ someone (Luke 7:6-9). This is why the modern church makes God sick - there are very few servants!
6. Some Areas of Service in a local church:

- a. Sunday School teaching, and class helpers
- b. Puppeteers
- c. Mailing Birthday Cards, and Visitor letters
- d. Book table - organising and handling books, tracts, videos
- e. Tea table - purchasing, organising the table, washing cups
- f. The Pastor’s visitation partner(s)
- g. Weekly Bible Club leader
- h. Discipler - teaches someone through the discipleship course
- i. Crèche worker on Sunday evenings

C. Reaping a Greater Harvest (6:7)

1. Satan’s attempt to split the church had been defeated by adapting to meet the need of the Grecian believers. Principle: don’t only look after your own life (Philp 2:4). In other words, meet people’s needs!
2. Christianity was back in action. Things were as they should be.
 - a. People were sharing the work-load. More involvement.
 - b. The word of God spread out as the apostles now spent more time on getting it out.
 - c. The number of people getting saved also increased
 - d. Those who had been opposed to Christ the most (the priests), were surrendering to the truth - Satan was losing ground!

D. Stephen Stands on His Own (6:8-15) He enters into battle!

1. Stephen’s miracles (6:8)
 - a. We are in the apostolic age of the church
 - b. The apostles have extended powers to these deacons
 - c. The deacons not only served tables, but preached the Gospel
 - d. Wonders and miracles will always be associated with those full of faith, and power. Not by the laying on of hands, but by the closeness of the walk with the Lord!
2. Stephen’s menace (6:9-15). Five synagogues take on Stephen
 - a. The synagogue was the Jewish “church” - meant “_____”.
 - b. Here was a synagogue of “worshippers” who “disputed” (debated) with Stephen about the Scriptures! If people would just do this today!
 - c. They were not able to win against his wisdom (depth) and spirit (attitude; confidence, correctness).
 - d. So, when you can’t win with facts, you use _____ (6:11-13)
 - 1) The “religious” crowd believes the end justifies the means, so they bribe some professional liars to stir up the crowd who were listening to Stephen preach.
 - 2) They worked on people’s emotions - said that Stephen was attacking Moses and God (ie, Mary, and the saints).
 - 3) Brought Stephen before “the council” (this council is working overtime putting these guys on trials!
 - 4) False witnesses take center stage - reject the truth, so they promote liars! Jesus was accused by false witnesses.
3. Stephen’s message (6:14).
 - a. The second coming of Christ was _____ - at any moment! Jesus was coming back, and they could die at His return - not talking about something way off in distant future! Not looking for signs either - signs already fulfilled enough!
 - b. Jesus, (not a nuclear bomb) will *Himself* destroy this Temple, and place (2 Thes 1:7-9). The Temple will be “occupied” by a false christ - the abomination of desolation!
 - c. The “customs” of the Jews will be changed - this was a big cut because the Jews treasured their “customs” (Mk 7:9). They already had been as far as a Christian was concerned:
 - 1) No more lambs to be slaughtered
 - 2) No more priesthood - every believer is now a priest
 - 3) No more Sabbaths, religious ceremonies - now it is the first day of the week (Sunday) that has the memorial!

- d. That Jesus changes lives - Stephen's face was not full of fear, or hatred, but of joy, and confidence - like an angel (6:15)! This was the greatest part of Stephen's message!

III. Conclusion and Study Questions