

Acts 6:1-7

Leading, serving and other logical things.

1. In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2. 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. 3. 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 4. and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."
5. 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. 6. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. 7. 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.

1. The issue is the logistics of care. V1

Comment [1]:

1. In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

Comment [2]:

2. The 12 called a meeting of disciples (church) v2

2. 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.

Comment [3]:

Note: the word translated wait or serve is diaconos which is where we get the concept and title of our deacons. They are servants. They serve by doing their roles of logically running the church.

A couple of things here:

- A. 12 or the apostles called the meeting - set the direction
- B. The 12 needed to stay focused in what was their ministry. Teaching Gods word.
- C. This is not a put down to those in the hospitality industry but a focusing of roles.

3. The leadership offered a solution. V3

3. 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

Comment [4]:

That's what we do! We choose people to do a certain job and we turn the responsibility over to them. One thing we ain't great at is letting them have the authority to do the job as well as the responsibility. But notice the requirements - "known to be full of the Spirit". We tend to choose because of experience in a certain area. An expertise. That isn't Gods criteria. So someone can be deacon of mission, youth or finance if they are full of the Spirit but not necessarily experienced in those fields! Yes! And don't try arguing that with me at the door on the way out as very few people called by God in scripture had the qualifications to do the job.

4. This concept of service released the 12, the apostles, to do their thing.

4. and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

Comment [5]:

That's what happens, the deacons do their thing so I can do mine. Yep

But

They also do their thing so you can do yours.

Just as these early deacons released the apostle for their ministry, our deacons release you to yours. You don't have to worry about the logistic side of it, just get on with your ministry. It is a great system.

As an aside, a couple of months ago someone tried to argue that the Presbyterian system was more biblical than the baptist system of church governance. They picked the wrong person to attack on that one. After all a baptist pastor should be able to defend his belief structure. On top of that, I understand their view point, I know their arguments I just feel they highlight a different set of theological points. Anyway, I made the comment that not only is the baptist viewpoint true to scripture but it is also the most culturally appropriate form of church governance. Briefly I outlined these things:

- A. A voice for all members, both in voting and say after all we have a democratic understanding
- B. Our leaders come from within, we vote for our people to lead us.
- C. Any member can lead the non legal aspects of our worship. Preach, lead communion, take a funeral - just can't do weddings, that is a state gov, required thing.

Now there are other concepts as well. We are biblical, we are culturally appropriate but we also set people apart to do what God has called them to.

5. They followed the leaders (apostles) plan. V5-6

5. 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. 6. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

Comment [6]:

That's it. They followed the plan.

This is here it also hits us two weeks out from our ago. You vote em in, let em do the job and follow their lead.

Too often in churches I have seen that the leadership gets voted in then told what to do. The modern church needs to take responsibility for its voting. Let them do the job God has called them to. If you think you know better, stand for deacon.

Now one thing that hits me is we pray and lay hands on them, so now we do. In the few weeks after the agm we will pray and lay hands on these people. The new ones and continuing deacons.

6. Doing things Gods way has results. V7

7. 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.

Comment [7]:

Notice the results:

- A. Word of God spread
- B. Number of disciples increased
- C. Priests became obedient.

What has happened here?

They struggled with an issue, worked it through with the guidance of the Holy Spirit then put in place a solution to move forward then they grew.

There is our template for dealing with issues.
There is our template for moving forward.

This IS part of our future.