

## Acts 6:1-7

# Deacons are Servants

“raising dust by hastening”

Ideas/Words  
Herb Hodges

First, **the problem** they faced. Verse 1

Second, **the motion** they made. Verses 2-5a

Third, **the personnel** they choose. Verses 5b-6

Fourth, **the kingdom** was expanding. Verses 7

**Acts 6:1** Now at this time while the disciples were increasing *in number*, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic *Jews* against the *native* Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily servicing (G1248) *of food*.

- While the disciples were increasing, there was dissension.
- Dissension was **a problem**. Multiply people multiply problems.
- The Grecian/Hellenistic Jews (minority) said the Aramaic Jews/Hebrews were overlooking their widows.
- ...the daily serving (deaconing)
- This is the same word as “the work of service” in Eph. 4:12.
- All Christians are called to serve in personal ministry.

**Acts 6:2** So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve (G1247) tables. **3** Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit & of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.

- The 12 called a Members’ Meeting, congregation of disciples.
- The 12 needed to delegate this work in order to stay focused.
- Leaders were to be appointed for Hellenistic widow ministry.
- This was important-delegated-official work, not inferior work.
- **A motion** was made to correct the function & the relationships.
- The specs were transformed-reputable-wise Spirit-filled men.

**Acts 6:4** But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry (G1248) of the word.” **5a** The statement found approval with the whole congregation;

- The apostles had a front row seat praying with Jesus.
- They experienced Jesus’ devotion to prayer and the Word.
- This is the pattern of practice for pastor-teacher-trainers where telling is not teaching and listening is not learning.
- Giving attention to prayer & the ministry of the Word goes way beyond pulpit ministry into personal ministry.
- Ministering the Word to the saved is soul-care.  
Ministering the Word to the unsaved is soul-cure.
- **The motion** was unanimous.

**Acts 6:5b** and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. **6** And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.

## **The Personnel**

- The first six are Jews with Greek names, Hellenistic Jews.
- Nicolas was a proselyte...a Gentile background believer.
- Prayer led to their appointment & solidified their appointment.
- The 12 were part of the 7's ministry, & the 7 were part of the 12's ministry. Both ministries are sacred...Both approved...
- Ironically, Stephen's sermon is the second longest in the NT.
- Philip is known as an evangelists (Acts 21:8-9).

**Acts 6:7** The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

- God used His Instruments, the 12 & 7, in **kingdom expansion**.
- The Word spread as the disciples proclaimed & equipped.

Review:

- The 12 were released to focus on the Word and prayer.
- The 7 were Spirit-filled men and given an official task.
- The church leaders were egoless & had clarity of mission.

The leader's call is not only to know & teach the Word but also to apply it to the challenges that people face...

We apply the Word to our own lives... We do **personal ministry** & help others apply the Word to their lives.

I will go so far as to say that those who do not do **personal ministry** will most likely be poor applicers of Scripture...

In our ministry we do not invite as speakers at our programs those who are not engaged in **personal ministry**.

The NIV Application Commentary

# Developing Church Leaders — Guardians of Doctrine

Models of Character   Shepherds of Care   Champions for the Mission

***Surrendering***

***Abiding***

***Worshiping***

***Gathering***

***Equipping***

***Loving***

***Living Sent***

***Inviting Along***

***Proclaiming Christ***

## **Servants**

1. Build a Church Family who Functions as **Fellow Workers**
2. Act as One with **Unity** & **Mission**

Confusion —> Communication —> Coordination —> Collaboration

3. Win the Heart Overflowing with **the Love of King Jesus**
4. Excel at Execution **Doing The Word** & **Proclaiming Christ**