

Acts 6:1-7

July 20, 2025



CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

MAIN POINT

As the early church grew, so did the need for leaders to help meet the needs of those within the body. Our passage today explores how the early church resolved a challenge and created space for people of good character to step up and lead, creating greater church growth.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What has God been teaching you in our study of Acts so far?

How have we seen the church take care of one another?

What types of activities have we seen the church prioritize?

Last week, we read about the apostles being brought before the Sanhedrin (again) for preaching the good news about Jesus. Despite being flogged and receiving a harsh



rebuke from the Sanhedrin, they were released and continued speaking boldly. This week, we will check in on the church community and how they handled a challenge they encountered.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 6:1.

What challenge arose at the beginning of chapter 6?

Why would it be important for the disciples to find a solution? What might happen if they didn't address it?

What are some modern-day examples of this kind of challenge in the church?

Acts 6 opened with a problem: the “Hellenistic Jews” (v.1, Greek-speaking believers) believed their widows weren't being cared for properly. They lodged their complaint to the “Hebraic Jews” (v.1, Hebrew-speaking believers). Acts records a dramatic rise in believers from all different backgrounds, and one by product of that growth was, apparently, discrimination (perhaps unintentionally). Caring for those in need is an important function of the church, so this problem needed to be addressed. This is a tendency we still need to watch out for today, being careful not to discriminate, even unintentionally, against immigrants, new members, or people from different backgrounds than us; we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

“Widows” here would mean women whose husbands had died, divorced women, and women who did not have the protection provided by family. Some women in these categories would have been women of means, but many were not.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 6:2-6.

How did the apostles respond to this complaint?

How did they maintain their God-given priorities while also showing care to those being overlooked?

What can we learn about the importance of the whole church working together from these verses?

In response to the complaint, the apostles held a meeting with the “whole company” (v.2) to discuss the matter. Their primary mission was to pray and teach, so they appointed seven men to serve the tangible needs of the growing body of believers. Note that the company of believers including men and women, not just the twelve apostles,



selected men who were “of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom” (v.3) for this important task.

We shouldn’t read this hierarchically and think that the most important role in the church, reserved for leaders, is to preach, pray, and teach. All roles within the church body are important, from the teaching pastor to the person who puts out the chairs for Wednesday night supper. The roles we have in our church today are far expanded from the ones we see in Acts 6, but the heart behind them is the same: meeting the needs of the body. The meeting of these needs pleases the Lord and glorifies Him, just like good preaching and powerful prayer does.

The apostles made the ministry of preaching and prayer their priority. We may not all be called to preach or teach in a formal context, but all believers are called to pray, teach, and share the good news. Teaching others about Jesus is how we make disciples, a critical part of the Great Commission, which we are all commanded to fulfill. What that “teaching” practically looks like will vary based on an individual’s spiritual gifting and calling, but we all teach people what it means to follow Jesus through our words and our actions—on Sunday and beyond.

These seven men are considered the first church deacons. In Acts 6:2, Luke used the Greek word *diakoneō* to describe the function these men would perform, translated “to wait on.” *Diakoneō* means to serve and is often used to describe providing care.² This word is related to the Greek word *diákonos*, which Paul used in both his first letter to Timothy, describing the function of a deacon (1 Timothy 3:8-13), and again in Romans 16:1 to describe “our sister Pheobe,” who served in this role at the church at Cenchrea.

The apostles prayed over these seven men of good reputation, and the men went on to meet the needs of the widows in their community.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 6:7.

What was the result after the commissioning of leaders to serve the church?

What does this teach us about the importance of making sure those in need are taken care of?

What does today’s passage teach us about how a healthy church functions?

The apostles commissioned leaders to serve and oversee meeting of the needs of the church, “so the word of God spread,” with many being saved!

This is the type of impact the church can see when we exercise our spiritual gifts and make room for others to exercise theirs as well. God is glorified and the church is most effective when we all use the unique gifts God has given us to serve Him and His body (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).



APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What does today's study teach us about responding when we are faced with "growing pains" in our group or church?

What does this passage teach us about leadership?

How can we be more intentional in taking care of those in need in our church and community?

What are some ways we as a group, or specific group members, can better use our individual gifts to serve the church?

PRAYER

Close your time together by sharing prayer requests, praying for each other, and the group.

Thank God for uniquely gifting us to bless others. Thank Him for making a place for each of us to serve and help in the church. Ask for His help as you consider ways you can better serve our church and use your gifts to benefit others.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead as we continue the series on Acts next week.

July 27, 2025 --- Acts 6:8-7:53



COMMENTARY

Acts 6:1-7

6:1 The distinction between Hellenistic and Hebraic Jews probably refers to the irrespective languages. Many Jews whose primary language was Greek were converted to Christianity (e.g., Paul, Ac 9; see note at 22:3). Needy Hellenistic believers felt they had been neglected in the early church's charity distribution. This imbalance may have arisen due simply to the logistical challenge caused by the rapid addition of Hellenistic Jewish Christians. The existing church structure proved unable to meet the growing demands. It was time for change.

6:2–4 The distinction between those responsible for preaching and those responsible for distribution of food marks the beginning of functional distinction of roles and responsibilities in the early church. The apostles (the Twelve) believed prayer and preaching were their primary duties. It is not that other roles were unimportant. In fact, the high requirements (good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom) that had to be met by the seven men who would take over the duty of food distribution signals the importance of all roles in Christian service. Each of the "seven men" filled a position that later came to be reserved for deacons. Informally, therefore, these men were the first Christian deacons. They were responsible for the practical needs of the congregation.

6:5–6 Stephen and six others (their Greek names probably identify them as Hellenistic believers) were selected. They were set apart for service by prayer and the laying on of hands by the apostles. The laying on of hands occurs in several contexts in Acts (8:17; 13:3; 19:6). Here, as in 13:3, it indicated the church's recognition that God had called these people to a particular ministry. The ministry of Philip is highlighted in 8:4–13, 26–40.

6:7 The word of God spread, and the disciples increased greatly in number in the early church. Even a large group of priests became followers of Christ. Luke did not specify who the priests were, but they were probably those who performed duties in connection with worship at the temple. This put them in a good position to hear the apostles preach on a regular basis.

