

# Choosing Seven

(Series: Reimagining Church; Message Sixteen)

Acts 6:1-7 (8)

## A. The Church has already faced some challenging issues:

1. In Acts 4:1-21 and 5:17-40, early church leaders were harassed, beaten, jailed
2. In Acts 5, we encounter the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira
3. Now in Acts 6 comes an assault on the unity and mission of the Church

## DIVISION

### A. The Church in Acts 6 is primarily Jewish with two kinds of Jews

1. Some born and raised in Israel; they spoke Aramaic; they're Hebraic Jews
2. Others born away from Palestine; they spoke Greek; they're Hellenistic Jews

### B. In the tradition of the Jewish poor-relief, the Church provided provisions

1. Some Hellenists felt they were being slighted in the distribution
2. The seeds of discontent were planted and took root. They complained
  - a. Complaining usually starts from frustration, misunderstanding, hurt...
  - b. A quarrelsome spirit festers dangerously fast
3. Unchecked *murmuring* can destroy a church, side track it from its mission

### C. The Apostles got wind of this discontent

1. They summon the body of disciples (i.e., the Church) together

*“He who is greatest among you shall be your servant”* (Matthew 23:11)

  - a. This is a message about serving in the area of your spiritual gifting
  - b. Scripture tells us Christ, through His Spirit, apportions gifts to his disciples
2. So we have conflict. Conflict is inevitable - but we need to face it and seek resolution and reconciliation

## DESCRIPTIONS

### A. The Apostles calling was to lay a foundation through Scripture and Prayer

1. Notice how the Apostles responded to this new challenge:
  - a. First, they recognized the issue and addressed it
  - b. Second, they call the disciples together and share their response
  - c. Third, the disciples, realizing this response is the result of discerning the Scriptures and prayer, are pleased

### 2. The Apostles set the qualifications for serving

- a. *“People who are known...”* - people of character, well-thought off
- b. *“...full of the Holy Spirit...”* - people's whose life is governed by the Spirit
- c. *“...full of wisdom”* - people who have applied the Truth to their life

### B. The Disciples are asked to discern who these people might be

1. Every one of these names is Greek
2. The Apostles prayed about these men and then *“laid hands on them”* as a sign of identification
  - 1) That is, you go as member of the body of Christ; on our behalf
  - 2) We're on Christ's mission together; we just have different gifts and calling...

### C. Serving in the church is countercultural; it seldom results in accolades

## THE DEMONSTRATION

### A. The church is to be built around spiritual gifting

### B. When the church functions together as a “body” - the church grows...

1. First, the word of God increased (Acts 6:7a)
2. Second, the number of disciples multiplied greatly (6:7b)
3. Third, a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith (6:7c)
4. Fourth, Stephen did great wonders and signs among the people (6:8)
  - a. Stephen was a devoted follower of Jesus. *Have you made your decision yet?*
  - b. Stephen cast his lot in life with “The Way.” *Are you all in?*
  - c. Stephen studied the Scriptures faithfully. *Are you in the Word* regularly?
  - d. Stephen used his Spiritual gifts for Christ's church. *Are you using your spiritual gifts?*
  - e. Stephen accepted the opportunities to serve and the consequences that went with it. *Are you accepting the opportunities extended to you?*
  - f. Stephen became a bold witness for Jesus. He took a risk. *Have you taken a risk for the Gospel this month?*
  - g. Stephen decided he was willing to pay the ultimate price. *Are you willing to take up your cross and follow Jesus?*

### B. If the call went out to choose seven (to serve), would you be in that number?