

PRECEPT

ACTS 6:1-7

¹In 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.

PROMISE

No matter how hard we try, we can't do it all. In Acts chapter 6, this reality meets the growing church head-on in the form of neglected Hellenist (Greek-speaking Jewish Christians) widows. The Twelve had been supernaturally empowered to preach the Word, and it would have been foolish to suspend that work and instead focus only on meeting this specific need. It would also have been foolish to ignore the need and focus only on preaching. So they decided that seven men would be chosen to oversee the important work of helping the neglected of society (vv. 5-7). This collaboration between the Twelve and the larger group of disciples allowed the Gospel to extend beyond the work of the Twelve. The fact that these seven men were to "serve tables" did not diminish the other ways God chose to use them. Collaboration allows the believer to seek the good of the community in word and deed. We are all given gifts to utilize and encourage within the body of Christ, but God does not intend for the Christian community to be insular. We are to be a salt and a bright light in the world (Matthew 5:13-16). This means that we work together and offer a taste of the restorative and redemptive work of Christ in the here and now. God's kingdom is not spiritual versus secular. It is for all. So maybe we should stop trying to do it all on our own and get excited about what God could accomplish if we worked as a team and with people and groups already doing good work. God has placed us in our unique communities, with our unique skill sets, not to just bide our time until his return. We have to put ourselves out there. We shouldn't twiddle our thumbs until the second coming. We want to be found doing what our Father has asked us to do until Christ's return. If we want to live out our commission, grow in community, and live by His commandments, then we must find ways to collaborate for the common good. 1 Corinthians 12 says, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed... A spiritual gift is given to each of us for the common good." 1 Peter 4:10-11 also tells us, "God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Whoever speaks is to do so as one who speaks the oracles (the very words) of God. Whoever serves is to do so as one who serves by the strength which God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." When we use our spiritual gifts for the good of others, we will be satisfied, others will be edified, and God will be glorified.

PRACTICE

1. Collaboration. How does collaboration allow the church to reach more people with the Gospel?

2. Spiritual Gifts. Have you done the spiritual gifts survey? What are your top three gifts? How can you use your them to serve the needs of the church?

PRAYER

I. Canada

- Pray that all of Canada may fear the Lord. May all of the inhabitants of this country come to know Christ.

II. Edmonton

- Pray that more people will open their hearts to Jesus. May God revive our city with new life.

III. World

- Pray for comfort and for healing to those suffering from violence, conflict, and war worldwide.

IV. Diversity

- Ask for God's guidance as we strive to embrace diversity & love one another as God loves us.

V. Provision

- Pray for provision for each of us and to bless others around us.

VI. Communities

- Pray that we can may reach out to our communities so we can share the love of God to others.

VII. Home

- May love abound in our homes and family relationships. May homes be filled with joy and peace.