

Texts, ESV: Acts 6.1-7

**i. NT Church of Jerusalem, organized religion, in practice**

a In Acts 6, the Church is growing, which is good, **Acts 6.1**

b Greek speaking Jewish Christians say their widows are not being served

Horton: "Widows in those days could not go out and get employment. In fact, widows without sons or brothers were known to have starved to death."<sup>1</sup>

c We don't know from the Scripture if one group is being favored above another

**ii. We do know the "the twelve" act quickly and decisively, Acts 6.2**

a Until this time, The12 Apostles are preaching and distributing goods

1 They're doing all they can to meet spiritual and physical needs

2 It's a burden for The12, the Jerusalem Church is at 8,000 by now

b I'm thankful for sections like this in the *Faith and Practice*:

IYM: "Care for Pastors and Leaders 2. Are you seeing that pastors' and leaders' time is free for the ministries to which he or she is called and gifted? Are salaries adequate? Is there adequate time for rest, vacation and renewal each year?"<sup>2</sup>

c There are other sections like this, but IYM gets it, just like the NT Church

d Freeing the Pastor is not only about money, it's about time

**iii. The12 are NOT saying that they're better than those who serve tables**

a On the contrary, they're recognizing their limitations

b To lead and instruct the growing NT Church, The12 need to focus on the Word

c Now a new arm of the NT Church is being established

*\* By enlarging the leadership base first, the NT Church experiences growth*

1 **Acts 6.2**: "to serve tables," lit. verb form of the word Deacon

2 "to serve tables" can be translated "to deacon tables"

3 The original function of a Deacon is to care for physical needs

*\* I'm a PK, a Preacher's Kid. I married a DK, a Deacon's Kid. Crystal's practical perspective has been extremely valuable to me over time. I'm very strategic in my approach at times, but she has helped me walk out my vision countless times.*

**iv. 2020 is an election year, The12 tell the NT Church to elect 7 men**

a **Acts 6.3**: "seven men of good repute" or "who are well respected" (NLT)

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley M. Horton, *What the Bible Says About the Holy Spirit* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1997), 152.

<sup>2</sup> Indiana Yearly Meeting, *Faith and Practice of Indiana Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends* (Muncie, IN: 2018), 42.

- b Those who distribute physical goods and money should be trustworthy
- c As in the book of James last week, they must be unspotted role models

**v. Deacons must be “full of the Spirit and of wisdom” (Acts 6.3)**

Williams: “The practical affairs of the church call for the Spirit’s anointing so that the deacons’ wisdom is more than worldly. What they do should be under the wise direction of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>3</sup>

- a The Church does not copy governmental or business models
- b God did NOT raise up a government or business to share salvation
- c God created an institution that is entirely new in the earth
- d Church is God’s way of sharing salvation, HS directed and governed

**vi. We’re not sure of the method, but the NT Church elects 7 Deacons, Acts 6.3**

- a The 12 ratify the decision, and “appoint,” or set the Deacons in place
- b “appoint,” same term for ordain, They have an ordination service, **Acts 6.4-6**
- c The 12 commission the Deacons and “laid their hands on them”
- d IMPORTANT, NT Church organizes and takes action, so it grows, **Acts 6.7**

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**vii. A Deacon is a high office, with great responsibility to care for the flock**

- a The Early Church not only speaks the Word, but also lives the Word
- b They organize their religious practice based on the virtue of simplicity
- c They allocate resources, so that they can take action and serve the needy
- d They allocate resources and they mobilize servants of the house

**Invitation:**

- 1 We do NOT grow 1st, then scramble to enlarge the leadership base
- 2 That’s backward, ministry rests on the shoulders of leaders not vice versa

*\* By enlarging the leadership base first, the NT Church experiences growth*

**Prayer**

*Heavenly Father, our Provider, thank You for guiding the Church into practical, service-oriented ministry. Help us to fully realize our potential to reach Your flock and the Grand Traverse Region through simplicity of lifestyle and the giving of our time and resources. Through this pure religion, make us a beacon in town. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.*

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<sup>3</sup> J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology: the Church, the Kingdom, and Last Things* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 208.