

“Dealing with Growing Pains”

Acts 6:1-7

Central Idea of the Text—The early church dealt with the growing pains of administration by delegating responsibilities to Godly men.

Central Idea of the Sermon—In order to advance, the church needs Godly men to take responsibility to serve.

Purpose—Our church members need to be motivated and mobilized to serve within our church.

Introduction—Chinese foot binding

I. Growing Pains Revealed

- a. Early church in Jerusalem
- b. Neglect in the Distribution
 - i. Grecian Jewish Christians and Hebrew Jewish Christians
 - ii. Daily distribution—word we get deacon
- c. Apostle’s job
 - i. They were to focus on preaching the Word
 - ii. Leading the congregation in evangelism and teaching, and prayer
- d. Since the Apostles were the only ones who were recognized as “leaders,” the complaint and the solution came to them.
- e. They were in danger of losing focus on the main thing, in order to deal with a pressing need.
- f. Illus.—Pastor “mowing these 8 acres”
- g. Application
 - i. I have done all types of things as a pastor: sweeping/mopping, repairing AC ducts, laying tar to roofs, lay irrigation, thaw out a regulator on the roof...
 - ii. Each of those things potentially kept me from focusing on my calling.
 - iii. **Ephesians 4:11-12**—Equip the Saints
 - iv. If a church asks the pastoral staff to do more than they are called, the Word suffers
 - v. As the church grows this escalates.

II. Growing Pains Relieved

- a. The Apostle’s Plan Explained
 - i. Raise up some leaders and delegate this responsibility to them.
 - ii. Qualifications
 1. Men—Spiritual leaders
 2. Among you—church members
 3. Good repute—good testimony about them
 4. Full of the Spirit—Godly, spiritual men
 5. Full of Wisdom—practically gifted
 - iii. Apostles would put them in charge, affirming the congregation’s selections.
- b. The Apostle’s Plan Executed
 - i. The church chose seven men.
 - ii. All of these had Greek names: they were ministering to the Greek widows.
 - iii. The Apostles affirmed them by praying and laying their hands on them.
- c. The Apostle’s Plan’s Effect
 - i. The Word increased and multiplied.
 - ii. Many priests were saved
- d. Illus.—**Exodus 17:9-12**—Aaron and Hur
- e. Application
 - i. We cannot place the weight of this church on one man or even a small group of men.

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- ii. We can't expect one man to teach or evangelize or give or clean or...
 - iii. We must all do our part.
 - iv. This includes designated certain men to take up the mantle of leadership alongside the pastor to lead the work of the church.
 - v. This story lays the groundwork for Deacons.
- III. Principles for Deacons
- a. A Deacon is a Partner
 - i. Partner with the pastor to help the pastor keep the main thing the main thing
 - ii. Holding up his arms
 - b. A Deacon is a Problem Solver
 - i. All churches have issues and challenges.
 - ii. Deacons serve to solve those problems.
 - c. A Deacon is a Peacemaker
 - i. We must be on the same page following Jesus.
 - ii. Deacons are to preserve the unity of the church focusing on the gospel.
 - d. A Deacon is a Pole Handler
 - i. Testimony of deacons using long poles to beat of the snakes as the pastor baptizes in the stock tank.
 - ii. The Deacon is to protect the pastor from anything that would keep him from doing his work.
 - e. A Deacon is a Pachyderm
 - i. Story of elder elephants being brought into the herd to show adolescent elephants how to live.
 - ii. The Deacon sets the tone for the rest of the church and shows what the church's priorities are.

Conclusion

- Deacon Nominations this month
- Ultimately, I want to be a member of this church that fits the criteria of a deacon so that I could even be considered.
- Are you meeting that criteria?
- Are you of good repute, full of the spirit, full of wisdom?
- If you don't, you might be binding our church?

Ephesians 4:11 And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹² equipping the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, (Eph. 4:11 CSB17)

Exodus 17:9 Moses said to Joshua, "Select some men for us and go fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the hilltop with God's staff in my hand." ¹⁰ Joshua did as Moses had told him, and fought against Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ While Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, but whenever he put his hand down, Amalek prevailed. ¹² When Moses's hands grew heavy, they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat down on it. Then Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other so that his hands remained steady until the sun went down. (Exod. 17:9 CSB17)