

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

All About You, Great Things, As We Pray, Made, Beautiful Savior

WELCOME

Sadly, the church nowadays may be likened to a sports event – some are on the court playing while others prefer to be in the stands. Which side are you on now?

WORD

ACTS 6:1-7

Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. ² So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. ³ Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵ The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. ⁶ And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. ⁷ The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

From our previous studies, we saw God moving mightily in the early church — the apostles were rejoicing in suffering, many signs and wonders were taking place, nobody was in need because everybody was sharing everything, they were breaking bread from house to house. We see a seemingly perfect church. But as we continue to dig deeper, we see that there's no such thing as a perfect church. The reality is, problems are inevitable in every church and in every small group.

As we look into **Acts 6:1-7**, we will use the acronym S.E.R.V.E. to learn how the early church responded to a problem they encountered.

SOLVE PROBLEMS.

"Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food."

Acts 6:1

The Hellenistic Jews were part of the diaspora, the dispersion of the Jews beyond Israel. The native Hebrews, on the other hand, were those born and bred in Jerusalem. The cultural difference may have created this internal tension. We cannot deny the fact that we are all different – thus, conflicts are inevitable. But we can choose to be part of the problem or of the solution. We cannot choose to be neutral either, because if we are, we become part of the problem.

Problems are opportunities to serve and serving solves problems – both external and internal. We get the focus off of ourselves and on to others (**Philippians 2:4**).

ENSURE DEVOTION.

The apostles realized that they cannot do everything, so they decided to devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word (**Acts 6:2,4**).

The Greek word for "devote" is *proskartereō* – to be strong or firm towards anything, to endure or persevere in or with. This is a great reminder that if we are to serve God, we must be devoted. Whatever our hand finds to do, we are to do it with all our might (**Ecclesiastes 9:10**). The work we do for God has to be done to the best of our ability.

RECOGNIZE EVERY WORK FOR GOD AS IMPORTANT

The Apostles selected seven men from the Hellenistic Jews who were of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, and laid their hands on them — a Jewish custom of setting them apart (**Acts 6:3-4,6**). Even if they were to do food distribution, a seemingly small task, the Apostles set a criteria in choosing these men. This shows us that every work for God is important.

But lest we feel disqualified to serve, we should remember that this criteria is possible for us to achieve if we ask God to fill us with the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself promised that we **will** receive power through

WORD (cont'd)

the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:8**) and He will continue to qualify us.

VERIFY MOTIVATION

Out of the seven men that were chosen, only Philip and Stephen were mentioned again in the Bible (**Acts 6:5-6**). This shows us that we do not serve with a spotlight. It should not matter if people recognize us or not. We are all servants in the family of God. We should just go ahead and serve. As Craig Groeschel puts it, "Don't seek to be important. Instead be **faithful**. If you remain faithful, God will make what you are doing important for Him."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Are you focusing on your problems or are you seeing the problems around you? How can you be a solution to these problems?
2. In what areas of service will you serve God with all your might by the power of the Holy Spirit?
3. Knowing that every work for God is important, in what ways can you serve the body of Christ?
Encourage those who are not yet discipling to start with at least one person. You may also check www.ccf.org.ph/goserve for other opportunities to serve.

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

As you continue to practice Pray, Care, Share, be faithful and expect God to work!

Pray for opportunities to serve the people you are praying for and be ready to share the Gospel to them. Make sure to follow them up. This may be the start of your own discipleship group!

EXPECT GOD TO WORK!

In **Acts 6:7** we see that "The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith."

For us who follow Jesus, these are the greatest wins in life – being able to spread God's gospel message and being in a deep, loving relationship with others so that they too will be able to spread this message. If these things do not excite us, let us check our hearts. Maybe we are chasing after something else — money, career, relationships — which will never satisfy.

We may encounter challenges as we serve God but we can be assured that His grace will be sufficient for us. His grace will take us to whatever He wants us to go into if we follow Him faithfully, serve Him, and trust Him.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants and a God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends