

WEEKLY REFLECTION

This week's passage of Acts 6:1-7 introduces us to the first deacons, "seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and... wisdom." (v.3) All seven of the deacons have Greek names, suggesting a Hellenistic (Greek) background. This was perfect for the complaint that the Hellenistic Jews had lodged against the Aramaic-speaking ones (the Hebrews), as the Hellenistic widows were being neglected in the daily food distribution. (v.1) Scripture isn't clear on whether this was a simple language barrier problem, or if other cultural factors were at play. What is clear is the injustice within the church that needed to be addressed.

Before we proceed, let us be clear on one thing: there should be no hierarchy in church. We are a priesthood of believers (1 Pet. 2:9), brothers and sisters who together make up the body of Christ. (Eph. 4:15-16) The reason for the deacons' appointment was the twelve's recognition of their duty to devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. (Acts 6:4) The differentiation in the way that they served reflected God's unique assignments for them.

What does that mean for us today? Firstly, we see that God cares for those on the fringe. He cared for the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the sojourner (Zech. 7:10), and He asks His church to do the same. Secondly, we should make an effort to know those who are different from us, even if they are people we don't naturally click with. God sent His Son down to destroy the dividing wall of hostility between us and Himself. (Eph. 2:14) As His church, shouldn't we strive to do the same with our brothers and sisters? Lastly, God asks us all to serve. Together, we make up the body of Christ. It might not be preaching or teaching, and it might not be serving tables—but how can you contribute to the body of Christ? How might you step out of your comfort zone and serve?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

How do you react when someone comes to you with a complaint, or when you are involved in conflict? How do you address the problem, and how would you come up with a solution?

QUESTION TWO:

Are you familiar with your spiritual gifts? If so, take a moment to share them with each other. If not, feel free to do a short test together. (We recommend the one at [giftstest.com](https://www.giftstest.com))

Based on your group's understanding of each other, take turns having each person suggest 2-3 areas in which a certain member could serve. Encourage one another to learn more about those ministries, whether they are within or without the church. And if it is an area of ministry that doesn't yet exist, feel free to brainstorm together what that would look like, and see how your group could support each other in that initiative!

QUESTION THREE:

Is there a particular group or generation within our church whose physical and / or spiritual needs have been overlooked? If so, how can we help to make them feel valued and ministered to?

If not, what are some ways we can be contributing to The Gathering as a whole, so that we can prioritize the Word of God but also be caring for those in need in our city?