

THE FIRST SEVEN DEACONS

Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-12

Introduction: The Church at Jerusalem grew in a very short time from 120 to several thousand members. They had all things in common, caring for one another. A problem arose after a while. Some of the Gentile (Grecian) widows felt that they were being neglected but the Jewish widows were not. God had a solution.

I. EVEN MIDST PERSECUTION, THE CHURCH CONTINUED TO GROW

1. It seemed that the more the Church was afflicted and persecuted, the more it grew, multiplied.
2. The work of God cannot be hindered by people or even by hell itself.

II. AS THE CHURCH INCREASED, SO DID STRIFE AND DISCORD WITHIN

1. The Church started out with everyone of one accord.
2. Although the numbers increased, the joy did not.
3. Petty strife, fed by selfishness and pride, created problems.

III. THE COMPLAINT WAS, OF ALL THINGS, ABOUT MONEY

1. It is sad that insignificant things create most of the strife within the Church.
2. *"...The love of money is the root of all evil..." (1 Timothy 6:10)*
3. Most spats between husband and wife are about money/finances.
4. Most sore spots in a family have something to do with money.
5. Most Church splits begin with strife about money.

IV. NO CHURCH EVER HAS BEEN OR EVER WILL BE PERFECT IN THIS WORLD

1. Every congregation will eventually have problems to deal with and either overcome them or die.
2. Petty differences should never be allowed to break up the fellowship of a congregation of God's Family.

V. GOD ESTABLISHED THE OFFICE OF DEACON TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM

1. Why was the deacon's office established?
 - Deacons are to relieve their pastors of all secular, worldly concern, so that they (pastors) might devote themselves entirely to the spiritual ministry of the Church family.
 - Deacons are to see that their pastors have no need to concern themselves with everyday affairs.
 - Deacons are to see to the material needs of the pastor, that the Church property and members are cared for properly.
 - Deacons are to distribute the Church's funds and to be servants to the pastor and the Church family.
2. How were the first deacons chosen?
 - The apostles called the leaders of the congregations together and instructed them to choose seven men of good report from among their congregations.
 - The seven men were ordained permanently to the office.
3. What kind of men were the deacons to be?
 - Not chosen upon the basis of friendship but of faithfulness. (*Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:8-12*)
 - No man should ever be placed in this high office who does not meet the qualifications given in the Word of God.
4. What is the work for which deacons are ordained?
 - "Deacon" means "servant."
 - They are to serve the Church, the interests of the Gospel, and the pastor.
 - They are to relieve the pastor of the burden of caring for the material needs of the Church family.
 - They are to relieve the pastor of any burdens or cares that would in any way distract him from the spiritual needs of the Church family.
5. What affect did the service of these seven deacons have upon the Church?
 - The Word of God increased and many more were converted.
 - The Gospel was preached where it could not have been preached if they had not relieved the pastors.
 - The Church grew.

CONCLUSION:

1. Faithful deacons are an asset to any congregation and to the pastor's labors.
2. Together, pastors, deacons, and the Church family labor for the cause of Jesus Christ.
3. Those deacons who labor faithfully as deacons earn the respect and esteem of their pastor and their Church family.
4. Deacons were and are still GOD's idea of giving His pastors much needed relief and help.