



Lesson 8 – The Seven Deacons

Based on Acts 6:1-7

1) What kind of people made up of the early church in the very early days?

Acts 2:5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every _____ under heaven.

Among those of the Hebrew faith who were gathered at Jerusalem were some commonly known as Grecians, between whom and the Jews of Palestine there had long existed distrust and even antagonism.

The hearts of those who had been converted under the labors of the apostles, were softened and united by Christian love. Despite former prejudices, all were in harmony with one another. Satan knew that so long as this union continued to exist, he would be powerless to check the progress of gospel truth; and he sought to take advantage of former habits of thought, in the hope that thereby he might be able to introduce into the church elements of disunion.

2) What problem arose very early on?

Acts 6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a _____ of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

The cause of complaint was an alleged neglect of the Greek widows in the daily distribution of assistance. Any inequality would have been contrary to the spirit of the gospel, yet Satan had succeeded in arousing suspicion. Prompt measures must now be taken to remove all occasion for dissatisfaction, lest the enemy triumph in his effort to bring about a division among the believers.

3) What did the Disciples do?

Acts 6:2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should _____ the word of God, and serve tables.

The disciples of Jesus had reached a crisis in their experience. Under the wise leadership of the apostles, who labored unitedly in the power of the Holy Spirit, the work committed to the gospel messengers was developing rapidly. The church was continually enlarging, and this growth in membership brought increasingly heavy burdens upon those in charge. No one man, or even one set of men, could continue to bear these burdens alone, without imperiling the future prosperity of the church.

4) What conclusion did the Holy Spirit lead them to?

Acts 6:3-4 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you _____ of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and _____, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

Summoning a meeting of the believers, the apostles were led by the Holy Spirit to outline a plan for the better organization of all the working forces of the church. The time had come, the apostles stated, when the spiritual leaders having the oversight of the church should be relieved from the task of distributing to the poor and from similar burdens, so that they might be free to carry forward the work of preaching the gospel.



5) What did the church do?

Acts 6:5-6 And the saying pleased the whole _____: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had _____, they laid their hands on them.

These officers gave careful consideration to individual needs as well as to the general financial interests of the church, and by their prudent management and their godly example they were an important aid to their fellow officers in binding together the various interests of the church into a united whole.

6) What signified that they had done a good thing?

Acts 6:7 And the word of God _____; and the number of the disciples _____ in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

This ingathering of souls was due both to the greater freedom secured by the apostles and to the zeal and power shown by the seven deacons. The fact that these brethren had been ordained for the special work of looking after the needs of the poor, did not exclude them from teaching the faith. On the contrary, they were fully qualified to instruct others in the truth, and they engaged in the work with great earnestness and success.

To the early church had been entrusted a constantly enlarging work, that of establishing centers of light and blessing wherever there were honest souls willing to give themselves to the service of Christ. The proclamation of the gospel was to be world-wide in its extent, and the messengers of the cross could not hope to fulfill their important mission unless they should remain united in the bonds of Christian unity and thus reveal to the world that they were one with Christ in God.

7) What prayer had Jesus prayed for them (and us)?

John 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be _____, as we are.

8) Whose Word did they have?

John 17:14 I have given them thy _____; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

9) How does one become perfected?

John 17:23 _____ in _____, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

10) What proof was given to the world that they were called of God?

John 17:21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be _____ in _____: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Their spiritual life and power was dependent on a close connection with the One by whom they had been commissioned to preach the gospel.



Only as they were united with Christ could the disciples hope to have the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit and the co-operation of angels of heaven. With the help of these divine agencies, they would present before the world a united front and would be victorious in the conflict they were compelled to wage unceasingly against the powers of darkness. As they should continue to labor unitedly, heavenly messengers would go before them, opening the way; hearts would be prepared for the reception of truth, and many would be won to Christ.

11) What would God's Church look like?

Song of Solomon 6:10 Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an _____ with banners?

Nothing could withstand her onward progress. The church would advance from victory to victory, gloriously fulfilling her divine mission of proclaiming the gospel to the world.

12) What was Peter's command to the Church?

1 Peter 5:2-3 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by _____, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being _____ over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

13) Who were to be chosen as Deacons?

Acts 6:3 ...men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and _____ ...

These men were to take their position unitedly on the side of right and to maintain it with firmness and decision. Thus, they would have a uniting influence upon the entire flock.

14) What additions did God add later to the structure of the Church?

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly _____, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

15) What Gifts of the Spirit are given to individuals to help the group?

1 Corinthians 12:8-10 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of _____ by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of _____ by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another _____; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

16) Why is the Church called the body of Christ?

1 Corinthians 12:12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the _____ of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

17) What council did Jethro give to Moses?

Exodus 18:19-20 Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the _____ unto God: And thou shalt _____ them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.

18) After that, then what?

Exodus 18:21-22 Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating _____; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all _____: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee.

The time and strength of those who in the providence of God have been placed in leading positions of responsibility in the church, should be spent in dealing with the weightier matters demanding special wisdom and largeness of heart. It is not in the order of God that such men



should be appealed to for the adjustment of minor matters that others are well qualified to handle.

The same principles of piety and justice that were to guide the rulers among God's people in the time of Moses and of David, were also to be followed by those given the oversight of the newly organized church of God in the gospel dispensation. In the work of setting things in order in all the churches, and ordaining suitable men to act as officers, the apostles held to the high standards of leadership outlined in the Old Testament Scriptures.

19) What are the qualifications for Leading?

Titus 1:7-9 For a bishop must be blameless, as the _____ of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of _____, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the _____ as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

The order that was maintained in the early Christian church made it possible for them to move forward solidly as a well-disciplined army clad with the armor of God. The companies of believers, though scattered over a large territory, were all members of one body; all moved in concert and in harmony with one another. When dissension arose in a local church, as later it did arise in Antioch and elsewhere, and the believers were unable to come to an agreement among themselves, such matters were not permitted to create a division in the church, but were referred to a general council of the entire body of believers, made up of appointed delegates from the various local churches, with the apostles and elders in positions of leading responsibility. Thus, the efforts of Satan to attack the church in isolated places were met by concerted action on the part of all, and the plans of the enemy to disrupt and destroy were thwarted.

20) What did Paul say that we should never forget?

1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not the author of _____, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

He requires that order and system be observed in the conduct of church affairs today no less than in the days of old. He desires His work to be carried forward with thoroughness and exactness so that He may place upon it the seal of His approval. Christian is to be united with Christian, church with church, the human instrumentality co-operating with the divine, every agency subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all combined in giving to the world the good tidings of the grace of God.

Can you see God is a God of order?

Do you want to be unified and blessed?

When is the time to heed the Spirit's call?