



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Raising up Leaders – (ACTS Chapter 6)

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*An effective leader keeps focus amidst noise and is alert for opportunities to share responsibilities, even to replace themselves and increase their territory (1Chronicles 4:10). The powerful teaching in chapter six reports on the disciples' handling of dissension on their team, the challenges of exponential growth in their ministry, and continuous attacks from the opposition. **Has God trusted you with dramatic success in your work?***

INTRODUCTION

The first several months of the early church saw growth from one hundred twenty (Acts 1:15) to twenty, perhaps thirty thousand (Acts 5:14). These new believers departed area synagogues to meet in homes and attend mass teaching sessions in the temple courtyard. This would include more than a thousand widows most of whom had been receiving charity, and daily food from the synagogue that they left. Many of the new converts to Christianity were from villages and cities where Greek was their first language and Hebrew their second. These Hellenistic Jews were often seen as foreigners by some in the capital city. **How have you kept focus on the main thing while taking care of the people in your charge?**

CHALLENGE

Acts 6:1 Now in those days, when the number of disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution.

Complaints and murmurings are common in crowds! The Hebrews complained to Moses in the wilderness (Numbers 14:29)! God counted it as a complaint against Him and kept them from the Promised Land. **How do you respond to complaints and criticism?**

OPPORTUNITY

Acts 6:2-3 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom...." (NKJV).

The twelve apostles addressed the problem of food distribution by expanding their leadership team and dividing the responsibilities. This inspired action enabled them to thrive during a period of explosive growth. The disciples used Moses' example of keeping focus on preaching and teaching, as well seeking nominations from the community (Exodus 18:20-21). All seven had Greek names and were likely Hellenistic Jews who could handle the delicate mission of serving the widows. **Has God inspired you in a hard situation?**

RESULTS

Acts 6:7 And the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith. (NKJV).

The Apostle Luke used adjectives to express growth of the early church! Consider the spectacle resulting from thousands of believers gathering in synagogue courtyards in surrounding cities and in the Jerusalem capital. Now hundreds of Jewish priests believed in Jesus and were teaching the people! **What options do you have when it appears you are losing a following?**

OPPOSITION

Acts 6:8-10 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.

It is apparent that the seven new leaders were teaching and witnessing as well as distributing food and care. Stephen boldly debated some of the synagogue leaders in the public square (Luke 12:11). Unable to win with logic and reason, they resorted to spreading lies about Stephen. **What is your defense against media attacks?**

A PRAYER

Father God: Please grant me the wisdom and discernment to see beyond the noise. Give me words to guide others and shield me from the evil one! I pray in Jesus' Name. Amen!