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Acts / Word of God; Prayer; Service; Church Order; Church Growth / Acts 6:1–7

The risen King advances his church by ordering its ministries so that his people are cared for, prayer and the Word are not neglected, and the gospel continues to gain ground

The King Orders His Church

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Introduction

Awakening Church, welcome back to the book of Acts. For the last two Sundays, Luke has been showing us what the risen King is doing in and through his church.

We saw a church marked by real grace, real generosity, and real unity. Then we saw that unity threatened, from the inside, when Ananias and Sapphira came to the church with hypocrisy in their hearts. They wanted the appearance of devotion without the truth of it. The Lord exposed their sin, judged their deceit, and brought holy fear upon his people.

Then as soon as we turned from that internal struggle, Luke brings us back before the Sanhedrin. The apostles were arrested... again. And they were put in prison... again. They were warned and beaten, but the council couldn't silence them. When they left, they were rejoicing that they had been counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name of Jesus. And then, even after all that internal and external pressure, Luke closes that section by telling us that every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

One of the reasons it's so important to remember all that is because Acts chapter 6 doesn't drop out of the sky. We are not beginning a new story here we are continuing the one we have spent weeks in so far...

The word is still being preached. The church is still growing. The disciples are increasing.

And then, Luke brings us into this next scene, he takes us away from the courtroom and away from the prison. He brings us right into the ordinary life of the church.

And of all the things that we focus in on, of all the things that were probably going on simultaneously, this is where we zoom in... there are widows who need care. There are

believers from different backgrounds trying to live together as one people in Christ, and while that's happening... there is a complaint that can't simply be brushed aside.

What I want us to see is this isn't a small matter. Out of all the issues that must have been happening in this early church, we get these verses from the Holy Spirit about widows. These are the people Christ has redeemed. These are the people he has gathered into one body. And Luke is about to show us that the same King who preserves his church from hypocrisy and strengthens his witnesses before hostile rulers is also the King who cares about what happens in the daily life of his people.

The title of this sermon is The King Orders His Church.

Would you stand together with me as we hear the word of the Lord?

Sermon Text: Acts 6:1-7

Call: *"The grass withers and the flower fades,"*

Response: *"But the word of the Lord endures forever."*

1. The Pressure (v1)

1.1 The Multiplication and the Murmuring (v. 1a)

Look with me at the beginning of **verse 1**. Luke tells us that the disciples were increasing in number. So, the first thing we get is actually good news, the church is still growing. Think about everything we have seen leading up to this point. The apostles have been threatened, arrested, imprisoned, beaten, and repeatedly commanded to stop preaching in the name of Jesus.

And none of it has worked.

The risen King is still building his church.

But now that growth is bringing pressure. The growth itself isn't the problem, it's a blessing from God. But growth brings new needs and new responsibilities. There are thousands of believers in Jerusalem. More people means more needs, more people to care for, and more opportunities for someone to be overlooked.

And that's exactly what happens. Luke says that while the disciples were increasing, a complaint arose.

The word translated “complaint” has the idea of murmuring or grumbling. It's even used in the Greek Old Testament for Israel's murmuring in the wilderness.

Now, I want to be careful here because there really is a problem. These widows really are being neglected. And Luke doesn't tell us exactly how this complaint was expressed or how it reached the apostles. But the word he uses does remind us that something can be genuinely wrong and we can still respond to it wrongly. That's important in the church.

If there is a real problem, we shouldn't ignore it. But we also shouldn't allow a legitimate concern to become sinful grumbling. We shouldn't whisper about a problem to everyone except the people who can actually address it.

And watch what the apostles do here. They don't become defensive, and they don't ignore the concern. They deal with it.

A healthy church isn't a church that never has problems.

A healthy church deals with its problems according to the wisdom Christ has given us.

1.2 The Hellenists and the Hebrews (v. 1b)

But before we can understand the complaint, we need to understand the people involved in it. Who are these Hellenists, and who are these Hebrews?

The Hellenists were not Gentile Christians. They were Jewish Christians who spoke Greek. Many Jews had been born or were raised outside of Judea and they spoke Greek. They were shaped by a different culture, but they had come to Jerusalem, heard the gospel, and

believed that Jesus is the Christ.

The Hebrews were also Jewish Christians. They were more closely connected to Jerusalem and Judea. They spoke Hebrew or Aramaic. They knew the local culture. They likely had deeper roots, more relationships, and greater familiarity within the life of the city.

So this is not a Jew versus Gentile problem, but it is a kind of “home team” and away team” problem. It’s within the church, but it’s between two groups of Jewish believers who belong to the same Christ but come from different backgrounds. They confess the same Lord, they received the same Spirit, and they belong to the same body. But conversion does not erase every cultural distinction overnight.

They are one in Christ, but they are still learning how to live as one people. There are probably some old assumptions that remain, and in general... familiarity can affect who gets noticed. People can tend to gravitate toward those who speak like them, think like them, and who come from the same kind of background, and that is exactly why this matters for us.

The church should be the last place where people are treated as though they matter less because they are unfamiliar to us. There can’t be first class and second class members in the body of Christ. There can’t be a home team and an away team at Awakening either. The gospel doesn’t require us to become identical, cookie cutter Christians. But it does require us to love one another as those who have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

And before Luke tells us how the church is going to respond, he wants us to feel the weight of what’s happening. This complaint isn’t just going to be about food. It’s a threat to the unity of Christ’s church.

1.3 The Neglect and the Needy (v. 1c)

And now, at the end of verse 1, Luke tells us why this complaint has risen.

The Hellenists are complaining because their widows are being neglected in the daily distribution. And before we rush on past that, I need for us to feel the weight of that complaint. In the ancient world, widows were often among the most vulnerable people in society. A great many of them had no regular income, and some had no family able to care for them. This is the kind of person who couldn’t just go find more work, pick up a few extra

hours, or rely on the kinds of support systems we may take for granted today.

So if we might be tempted to think this is a very small issue, we should at least ask what Scripture tells us, because we are shown that God cares deeply about widows.

He is a father to the fatherless and a protector of widows. Psalm 68:5 “Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.”

He commands his people to care for them, and to never mistreat them. Exodus 22:22–24 “You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.”

James even says that true religion includes caring for widows in their affliction. James 1:27 “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”

So this daily distribution wasn't a small trivial matter.

This was food, this was material care, this was the church making sure that needy saints did not fall through the cracks. And Luke doesn't just say that the Hellenists felt neglected. He says that their widows were being neglected.

Now, we can't read too much into the text here either... because Luke doesn't tell us whether this was deliberate. He doesn't say that the Hebrew Christians were intentionally showing favoritism. It may have been poor administration, it could have been a lack of awareness, or just maybe the Hebrew widows (the home team... the faces you saw day in and day out) were more familiar to those who were handling the distribution.

But whatever the reason, the need was real. These women belonged to Christ, they belonged to the church, and they were being overlooked.

Awakening, that should search us because it's very possible to love the "idea of the church", while at the same time, failing to see people in the church.

- The quiet widow can be overlooked. We can say that we love one another, but there may be a widow who goes home after every service to a quiet house and no one knows whether she has what she needs.
- The elderly saint can be overlooked. There may be an elderly saint who can't drive at night, whose medical appointments have become difficult, or whose house has become too much for them to manage alone.
- The new family can be overlooked. There may be a new family who has been attending for several weeks. We recognize their faces, but we have never learned their names, never invited them into our homes, and would have no idea if they were struggling.
- The person who has been sitting among us for months but still does not have meaningful connections can be overlooked.

And when that happens, it matters to Christ, but ask yourself ... why? Answer: Because the people we're tempted to overlook belong to him.

This isn't just a question of good order or church administration, it's a question of Christian love. The church must care about the people Christ has gathered into his body. The point isn't that the church has to pry into every person's life. The point is that the church can't be content to remain distant from one another's lives. Jesus hasn't gathered us into one body so that we can just attend the same service. He gathered us so that we would know one another, love one another, and carry one another's burdens.

And that is the pressure Luke places before us in verse 1. This burden, this real need in the church, and it has to be addressed.

2. The Priority (v2-4)

2.1 The Tables and the Testimony (v. 2)

Now in **verse 2** we come to the apostles response. They don't ignore the complaint and they don't get defensive about an issue being raised. What they do is gather the whole church together and address the issue head on. And what they say is both surprising and instructive for us.

"It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables." At first glance, this can almost sound arrogant. Are the apostles saying that serving widows is beneath them? Not at all.

We know from earlier in Acts (chapter 4) that they had already been involved in caring for the needs of the church. Money was being laid at their feet and distributed to those in need. So what's happening here isn't about refusing to serve. There is a deeper issue at play. The apostles recognize that they have been given a specific calling from Christ himself, they have been entrusted with the ministry of the word and prayer. If they personally take on every need in this growing church, the ministry of prayer and the word will be neglected, and Christ hasn't called them to neglect either the widows or the word.

So what do they do...?

Do the widows need to be cared for? Absolutely.

Does the word of God need to be preached? Absolutely.

So which one do we sacrifice?

Neither.

The apostles refuse to accept a false choice.

They won't choose between caring for the widows and preaching the word. Both matter! But they understand that they can't personally carry both responsibilities in a church this size without one of them being neglected.

So they make a very clear distinction for us... they say "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables."

Notice what Luke calls their ministry. He doesn't just say "preaching." He calls it "the word of

God.” That is why it matters so much. The apostles aren’t protecting their favorite hobby here... They're protecting the very means Christ has appointed to build and feed his church.

And this is where we need to keep the order clear. The point is not that bodies can be fed while souls are left to starve. Jesus doesn’t allow that false choice. There will be a way for the widows to be cared for without the word of God being pushed aside.

This is a foundational moment in the life of the early church, and the apostles establish a priority that will later provide a pattern for pastoral ministry.

This isn't a distinction between spiritual work and unspiritual work. Caring for widows is spiritual work. Preaching the word is spiritual work. The difference isn't between important ministry and unimportant ministry. The difference is between different callings.

And Christ gives his church an answer that protects both the ministry of mercy and the ministry of the word.

2.2 The Seven and the Standards (v. 3)

Instead of trying to do everything themselves, the apostles give the church a clear solution in **verse 3**.

This is a foundational pattern for the diaconal office. A real need has risen up in the church, and the congregation is told to recognize qualified men from among themselves. Then, the apostles will appoint those men to the duty. Luke never actually calls these seven men deacons, so I don't want to say more than the text says. But what we clearly see here is a foundational pattern that will later be expressed in the diaconal office.

I want to point out that the church has a real role here. Even with apostles present, they don’t simply disappear and come back with seven names. But at the same time, they don’t abandon their leadership role. The apostles establish the standards, the congregation recognizes qualified men, and the apostles appoint them to the work.

Now we get to look into what those standards are...

They don’t say, “Find seven men who are good with money.”

They don't say, "Find seven men who have time available."

They start with character!

- These men must be of good repute. That means that their godliness has to already be known in the church. The church isn't putting a man into a ministry and then hope the responsibility will eventually make him godly. That's INSANE! Instead scripture shows us that his life should already show that he is trustworthy.

- They must be full of the Spirit. Apparently, you need Spirit filled men to care for widows. This isn't some kind of lesser work, and this isn't nonspiritual business. The care of needy saints is ministry, and it requires men whose lives show the work of the Holy Spirit.

- And they must be full of wisdom. This job will involve real decisions, limited resources, and a church whose Hellenist widows have been overlooked. These men need wisdom to make sure the care of the church is done well and that this real problem doesn't become a deeper division.

Character. Godliness. Wisdom.

We often begin with ability don't we? Can he manage money? Can he organize people? Does he have experience? Does he have time?

Those aren't unimportant questions, but that's not where the apostles begin.

God starts with the man himself. Is he known as trustworthy? Is his life marked by the Spirit? Does he have the wisdom to serve Christ's people faithfully? That is where the apostles begin because a man can be very capable and still not be qualified.

The church should never be impressed by a resume if the man's life doesn't show the character of Christ. The church is not a business, and biblical qualifications are not the same as a resume. So, ability matters, but character comes first!

This is how the King orders his church. He refuses to put unqualified or unproven men in positions of service.

2.3 The Prayer and the Proclamation (v. 4)

After telling the church what they won't do, the apostles now tell us what they will do in **verse 4**. This is the heartbeat of the text and of their response.

The apostles are not trying to get out of work, what they are doing is protecting the work Christ has given them. They won't allow the growing needs of the church to pull them away from the ministry they have been called to carry.

The word "devote" means to give constant attention to something... to stick with it...to give yourself over to it without distraction. This isn't something the apostles just fit in when they have leftover time.

They will **devote** themselves to it!

And then we will ask, devote themselves to what? Prayer...can we see that prayer comes first?

I don't want to build an entire doctrine on word order alone, but the order does makes sense to me. The apostles know they can preach the truth, but they can't open a single heart. They know they can proclaim Christ, but they can't raise a sinner from spiritual death. It might be them that's doing the planting and watering, but only God gives the growth. That's why prayer is not what happens after the work is done... Prayer is the work.

And if I am honest, prayer is often the hardest part of ministry to measure.

I can show you sermon notes. (Pages and pages, references and highlights)

I can show you books with marked pages.

I can show you hours of preparation.

But when I stand up from prayer, what have I produced that anyone can see? Nothing...

But prayer is a lot like the roots underneath a tree. Nobody walks up to a great oak tree and says, look at those incredible roots! You can't even see them. We notice the trunk, we notice the branches, we notice the leaves, we notice the fruit. But everything we can see above the ground is being supported by something we can't see underneath it.

And ministry is just like that. We can become so focused on producing the things people can see that we neglect the hidden work of prayer.

And even though prayer might often be hidden like the roots of a great tree, the apostles say that prayer is one of the things they will not allow the needs of a growing church to push aside.

Then they speak of the ministry of the word.

And Awakening Church, this is bigger than standing in a pulpit on Sunday morning. The ministry of the word includes studying Scripture, laboring to understand it, preparing to teach it, preaching it publicly and privately, correcting error, counseling the suffering, and bringing Christ to those who need him.

A pastor can attend every meeting, answer every phone call, solve every immediate problem, and still **fail** to give the church what Christ has called him to give. This makes the most sense to me when i think about it from the perspective of the Navy. I think about a man standing watch on a ship. There might be a hundred important things happening around him. There might even be people who genuinely could use his help. But he can't abandon the watch he has been assigned every time another need comes up. But it's not because those other things don't matter. It's because somebody has entrusted him with a particular responsibility, and if he leaves his post to do everything else, the thing he was specifically assigned to do goes undone.

And that's what the apostles understand. There are a thousand good things they could give themselves to. But Christ has given them a particular responsibility, and they refuse to abandon their post.

The church doesn't need a pastor who just stays busy. **The church needs a man who has been with God!** Been with God in prayer and been with God laboring in the word.

So, that's what the King does, he orders his church so that the men called to shepherd his

people can give themselves fully to the work Christ has given them.

3. The Provision (v5-6)

3.1 The Congregation and the Choice (v. 5)

The same church that had a complaint and murmuring in verse 1 is now united and pleased together in **verse 5**. The problem didn't disappear because everyone pretended it wasn't there. Unity was protected because the problem was handled with wisdom and order.

Then Luke gives us this amazing gem, "they chose." The congregation didn't just offer suggestions and then let the apostles do whatever they wanted, they actually selected the men. The apostles set the biblical standard and retained the authority to appoint, but the church had a real and meaningful role in recognizing qualified servants.

This is not leadership without the people, and it is not the people doing whatever they want. It's the King ordering his church through both godly leadership and meaningful congregational involvement.

Then we get their names, right in the text, recorded for eternity! Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus.

We know a lot about Stephen and Philip because Luke tells us more about them later. But the other five disappear from the pages of Scripture after this verse. And that does not mean their ministry didn't matter. These men were chosen to make sure that needy widows were cared for. Scripture does not tell us everything they did, but Christ knew their work.

Awakening, most faithful Christian service will never get a chapter written about it. In fact, most of those who serve Christ faithfully will never become well known. We have often said this and I'll take the opportunity to say it again...

Faithfulness in service does not require prominence in name.

Before we go to verse 6, I want to show you one more thing. Every one of these seven men

has a Greek name. Now, that doesn't prove they were all Hellenists. But it is very possible that the church chose men from the very group that raised the complaint. And if that is what happened, it shows some remarkable humility. The Hebrew believers didn't fight to keep control of the distribution. They didn't even insist on making sure four of the seven came from their side and only three came from the Hellenists. They weren't jockeying for position at all.

They cared more about the widows being served than about who got the credit for serving them.

That's what Christian unity looks like...

3.2 The Prayer and the Purpose (v. 6)

The congregation has done what it was instructed to do. Now in **verse 6**, the apostles do what they said they would do.

Keep looking for the order throughout this text... The congregation doesn't appoint seven servants independently of its leadership, and the apostles don't just appoint men independently of the congregation. The church recognized these men as qualified, and now the apostles publicly set them apart for the responsibility they have been given.

And what do they do first? They pray.

That shouldn't surprise us, but it should instruct us. Even here, in these circumstances, they PRAY!

These men have already been recognized by the church, these men have a proven good reputation, they are full of the Spirit and of wisdom. They have even been chosen for the work by the very people they will be serving. I mean.... they have apostles there, we don't have apostles when we do these things... but they're here in verse 6...

So why pray?

Because being qualified for ministry doesn't mean you don't need God's help to carry out

ministry.

Awakening Church can examine a man.

Awakening Church can recognize his character.

Awakening Church can set him apart for a responsibility.

But Awakening Church.... you can't give him the grace he needs to serve faithfully.

So we need to pray... and the apostles pray. They recognize what God has already done in these men, and they ask God to continue doing what only he can do.

Then after that, they lay their hands on them. This isn't some kind of ceremony where the apostles are transferring spiritual power into the seven. Remember that none of these men would even be there if they didn't already have the Spirit. So, the apostles aren't manufacturing qualifications through their hands. The laying on of hands is a public act of recognition and commission, it's the same kind of public setting apart we see when Moses laid his hands on Joshua before the people of Israel. They are publicly recognizing the men Christ has provided and commissioning them for the duty they have been given.

And just in case you have been swept up thinking about this portion of the text, don't forget what this tells us about the care of widows... The church doesn't treat this as a small task.

The congregation recognizes qualified men.

The apostles pray over them.

They publicly set them apart.

Remember that this work matters, and this work being done well and in order matters because the people being served belong to Christ. The widows aren't ignored. The Seven are set apart. The apostles remain devoted to prayer and the word, and now Luke shows us what happens when the King orders his church.

4. The Progress (v7)

4.1 The Gospel Gains Ground (v. 7a)

Luke ends this section by showing us what comes out of everything that has just taken place in **verse 7**.

He doesn't say the church became more efficient. He doesn't say that they finally got their organization figured out. What Luke tells us is... the word of God increased.

Awakening, don't miss that. The widows are being cared for, the apostles are devoted to prayer and the ministry of the word, the Seven have been set apart for the work. And what keeps moving forward...?

The Word of God.

That's what we have been watching all throughout Acts. The gospel is preached, sinners believe, and Christ continues gathering his people.

So when the King orders his church here, the result isn't just better organization. It's not order for order's sake... The result is that the gospel itself gains ground.

And we need to keep this in the right order, Christ alone gives the increase. The church can't manufacture this kind of growth. But Christ ordinarily advances his church through the means he has given us... so...

The King orders his church, and his word keeps moving forward.

4.2 The Multitude Multiplies (v. 7b)

And because the word increased, Luke immediately tells us what followed... the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem.

The word is increasing, and through that word, Christ is continuing to gather people to himself. And we should notice that Luke doesn't just say that a few more people were added. He says the number of disciples multiplied greatly.

I don't think we should rush past that because these aren't just numbers being added to a church roll. These are sinners hearing the gospel, believing that Jesus is the Christ, and

becoming his disciples.

And remember where we started in verse 1. Luke told us that the disciples were increasing in number. Now we get to verse 7, and they aren't just increasing. Luke says they are multiplying greatly.

Persecution didn't stop the advance of Christ's kingdom. Hypocrisy within the church didn't stop it. And now, even the internal pressures and burdens of a rapidly growing church don't stop it.

The King orders his church, the word continues to increase, and the multitude multiplies. And Luke isn't finished. Because now he tells us that the gospel is reaching somewhere we might not have expected.

4.3 The Priests Profession (v. 7c)

At the end of verse 7 Luke records one of the most striking details in the entire account... and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

These weren't "ordinary" Jews on the margins of society. These were priests, they were men connected to the temple, to the sacrifices, and to the Old Covenant system. Many of them came from the very circles that had opposed Jesus and the apostles. This little bit of text at the end of verse 7 tells us that the gospel was penetrating into heart of the Old Covenant religious order. Men whose lives had been bound up in the temple system were now submitting to the risen Christ and becoming obedient to the faith.

And what does Luke mean when he says they became obedient to the faith? He doesn't mean they earned salvation by works. He means they received the gospel... they confessed Christ. They submitted to the truth about Jesus, and they came under the reign of the King. And from the wider biblical perspective, this is a beautiful sign of Christ's victory. Priests are being gathered out of the Old Covenant order and into the New Covenant people of God.

The gospel gains ground.

The multitude multiplies.

And even priests become obedient to the faith.

Christ isn't just winning converts at the edges, he's claiming allegiance from inside the very system that rejected him.

And before we leave verse 7, I don't want us to misunderstand what Luke is showing us here.

The word of God is increasing. The disciples are multiplying. Even priests are becoming obedient to the faith.

But that doesn't mean everything is suddenly going to be easy for the church.

The advance of the kingdom doesn't remove opposition. It provokes it!

And Luke is about to show us that through one of the men we just met in this passage... Stephen.

But we'll leave that for Pastor Mike next week.

For now, I want us to step back from these seven verses and ask a really simple question:

Who is actually building this church?

5. Application And Call To Christ

Who is actually building this church?

I think that's a good question because there are a lot of people doing things in these seven verses.

The apostles act.

The congregation acts.

The Seven act.

The widows are cared for.

The word is preached.

The disciples multiply.

But who is behind all of it? Who is actually building this church?

It's the King.

That's really what I want us to see as we close.

- **Christ preserves the unity of his church.**
- **Christ provides qualified servants for mercy ministry.**
- **Christ keeps the apostles devoted to prayer and the word.**
- **Christ causes his word to spread.**
- **Christ multiplies disciples.**
- **Christ brings priests to obedient faith.**

The church is active, but the King is advancing his church through the ordinary, faithful ministry of his people.

And I think that's important because we can spend seven verses talking about church order and walk away thinking that the strength of the church is found in getting everything organized correctly.

It's not.

Biblical order matters. We have seen that all through this text.

But Awakening, **we can't confuse order with power.**

A deacon board can't raise the dead.

A perfectly organized church can't make the word increase.

We can't organize a sinner into the kingdom of God.

Christ is the power of his church.

He is the one who was crucified. (Acts 5:30)

He is the one who rose from the grave. (Acts 2:24)

He is the King who ascended to the right hand of the Father. (Acts 5:31)

He is the one who poured out his Spirit. (Acts 2:33)

And he is the one we have watched building his church from the opening verses of Acts. (Acts 2:47)

That's why the title this morning isn't The Church Gets Itself In Order.

It's **The King Orders His Church.**

Christ doesn't save a people and then leave them to figure everything out for themselves. He gathers his people. He gives his church order. He raises up servants to care for real needs. He preserves the ministry of prayer and the word. He guards the unity of his people. And through his church, his gospel continues to gain ground.

And if you're here this morning and you don't know this King, then I want you to understand that getting involved in a church isn't what you need first.

You need Christ.

You don't need a place to serve before you need a Savior.

That's the call to you this morning.

Become obedient to the faith.

Turn from your sin.

Believe the gospel.

Trust in the crucified and risen Christ.

You can't save yourself. You can't serve enough. You can't organize your life well enough.
You can't make yourself righteous before God.

But Christ saves sinners, so come to him.

And church, when we look at these seven verses, I don't want our final thought to be how well the early church handled a difficult administrative problem... I want our final thought to be about the King.

Christ preserves his church. The church belongs to him.

Christ orders his church. The mission is directed by him.

Christ advances his church. The power comes from him.

Christ builds his church. The glory belongs to him.

Awakening Church, **It's Christ. It's always Christ.**

6. Questions For Study

Please be encouraged to use these questions for reflection throughout the week and Awakening discipleship group discussions.

1. Acts 6 begins with a legitimate problem, but Luke describes the response as murmuring or grumbling. What does this show us about how we should respond when we see a real problem in the church? Are you more likely to grumble about a problem, ignore it, or lovingly bring it to the people who can actually help address it? Is there anything you need to confess or handle differently?
2. The Hellenistic widows were being overlooked even though they belonged to the same body. Who are some people in our church that might be easy for you personally to overlook? What would it look like for you to intentionally know, love, serve, or carry the burdens of someone outside your normal circle?
3. The apostles refused to neglect prayer and the ministry of the Word, even for another genuinely good and necessary ministry. What good things are most likely to crowd out the things Christ has actually called you to prioritize? Is there a place in your life where busyness is disguising a lack of faithfulness?
4. The Seven were chosen first because of their character, godliness, and wisdom rather than just their ability. If your church were evaluating your life by those same kinds of qualities, what would they see? Where do you see evidence of God's grace in your character, and where do you need to pray for growth?
5. Christ is the one who builds and advances his church. Where are you most tempted to rely on yourself, other people, or the right plans instead of depending upon Christ? How should this truth shape the way you pray, serve, and trust him with the work of his church?

Questions for small children during family devotion:

Please be encouraged to use these questions in family devotion throughout the week,

especially for young minds learning about Christ.

1. What problem happened when the church grew bigger?

Parent guided answer: Some of the widows were being overlooked and were not getting the care they needed.

2. What two things did the apostles say they needed to keep doing?

Parent guided answer: Praying and teaching God's Word.

3. What kind of men did the church choose to help care for the widows?

Parent guided answer: Men with a good reputation who were full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.

4. What happened when the Word of God continued to spread?

Parent guided answer: More and more people believed in Jesus and became his disciples.

5. Who is really building, caring for, and growing Christ's church?

Parent guided answer: Jesus Christ. He is the King who builds and cares for his church.