

Acts 6:1-15, 7:54-60
Cross Brand
C3:16
4.15.26
Source
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I. Division regarding the widows.

Acts 6:1-7 In those days, as the disciples were increasing in number, there arose a complaint by the Hellenistic Jews against the Hebraic Jews that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution. ² The Twelve summoned the whole company of the disciples and said, "It would not be right for us to give up preaching the word of God to wait on tables. ³ Brothers and sisters, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we can appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵ This proposal pleased the whole company. So they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a convert from Antioch. ⁶ They had them stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. ⁷ So the word of God spread, the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly in number, and a large group of priests became obedient to the faith.

A. The need

- Church was big 20,000
- Limited leadership
- Unlimited duties (by apostles)
- The Hellenistic's were a small minority

B. The response

- The Apostles were not offended
- The apostles called for structure
 - Gather disciples
 - Sought 7 men to serve

C. The results

- The apostles preached
 - 2 results
 - Growth in disciples
 - Religious got saved

D. Application:

1. **Growth creates challenges!**
2. **God gives grace to meet the challenges!**
3. **Organization is a good thing!**

Why?

God's behavior

I Cor 14:33

Creation

God's word

Acts 6

II. The first Christian martyr

6:8-15 ⁸ Now Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ Opposition arose, however, from some members of the Freedmen's Synagogue, composed of both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, and they began to argue with Stephen. ¹⁰ But they were unable to stand up against his wisdom and the Spirit by whom he was speaking.

¹¹ Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We heard him speaking blasphemous words against Moses and God." ¹² They stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; so they came, seized him, and took him to the Sanhedrin. ¹³ They also presented false witnesses who said, "This man never stops speaking against this holy place and the law. ¹⁴ For we heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us." ¹⁵ And all who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at him and saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

7:54-60 ⁵⁴ When they heard these things, they were enraged[Ⓜ] and gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven. He saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ He said, "Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

⁵⁷ They yelled at the top of their voices, covered their ears, and together rushed against him. ⁵⁸ They dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. And the witnesses laid their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ While they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" ⁶⁰ He knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" And after saying this, he fell asleep

A. Stephen's character

He was a leadership transition
Stephen was the gap between two giants

He had a short ministry

He was full of

Faith

Spirit

Grace

Power

- B. Stephen's fearlessness
He was debated

He was debated by three camps

He was the winner!

He was loved and hated by same crowd

He was killed.

- C. Stephen's face
He was blessed

He was like Moses

- D. Application

1. The Holy Spirit WILL intervene on our behalf when under Satanic attacks.
2. Truth creates tension.