

Church: Servants and Shepherds
(Eph 4:11-16; Acts 6:1-7)

Church: God's people for God's purpose.

- I. God has a church for his mission (Mt 28:19-20).**
- II. The Church serves for God's glory (1Pt 4:10-11).**
- III. Every member has a place (1Co 12:12).**
- IV. God's leaders are servants (Phil 2:5-11).**
- V. God appoints the structure (Phil 1:1).**

Big idea: When we all work together the Word of God increases; so, we serve like deacons and lead like shepherds.

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. ² And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables." ³ Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

⁵ And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶ These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. ⁷ And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. (Act 6:1-7 ESV)

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes ... , when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Eph 4:11-14, 16; *cf* Acts 19).

Big idea: When we all work together the Word of God increases; so, we serve like deacons and lead like shepherds.

Servants and Shepherds

- 1. Servants hold the flock together (Acts 6:1-6).**
- 2. Shepherds protect the flock (Eph 4:11-16).**
- 3. Sheep are stubborn, and they bite (Num 11-17).**

1. Servants hold the flock together (Acts 6).

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. ² And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³ Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." (Act 6:1-4).

Jesus: Servant of servants (Phil 2).

- i. Took on the form of a servant (Phil 2:5-11).
- ii. He came to serve, not be served (Mark 10:41-42).

Serve like an Acts 6 servant.

- i. Protect unity in the church (v. 1).**
- ii. Keep up with legitimate needs (vv. 1, 7).**
- iii. Handle criticism/divisiveness (v. 3).**
- iv. Maintain ministerial priorities (v. 4).**
- v. Share ministry duties (vv. 5-6).**
- vi. Further the Kingdom of God (v. 7).**

2. Shepherds protect the flock (Acts 6:2; Titus 1:9).

² And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. (Acts 6:2) ...

⁹ [Shepherds] must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. (Titus 1:9).

Jesus: Shepherd of shepherds.

- i. He protects us (Ps 23).**
- ii. Jesus is ultimately responsible for our souls (Jn 10:29).**
- iii. Shepherds serve under Jesus' authority (1Pt 5:4).**

Shepherd God's way.

- i. Focus on the Word and prayer (Acts 6:2, 4, 7).**
- ii. Equip members for ministry (Eph 4:11-12).**
- iii. Teach the congregation (1Ti 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9).**
- iv. Refute improper doctrine (Titus 1:9).**
- v. Guard the flock (Acts 20:17, 28).**
- vi. Oversee the flock of God (1Pt 5:1-3; Heb 13:17).**
- vii. Lead by example (Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 5:2-3).**

3. Sheep are stubborn, and they bite (Num 11-17).

i. **We're all sheep & we all bite (Rom 3:9-12).**

ii. **Jesus died for stubborn sheep (Rom 5:8).**

iii. **Our love for God allows us to love sheep (Jn 21).**

iv. **Love covers a multitude of sins (1Pt 4:7-8; Jn 3:16).**

The love of God covers your sin.

Trust him today.