

SEVEN CHOSEN AS HELPERS

Acts 6:1-7

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Apostles, Greek-speaking Jews, Hebrew-speaking Jews

Key-location: Jerusalem

Key-repetitions:

- Actions: Greek-speaking believers complained (Ac 6:1); food distributed (Ac 6:1, 2, 3); apostles gathered all the disciples (Ac 6:2); apostles would pray and teach (Ac 6:3); believers chose seven (Ac 6:5); apostles prayed and placed hands on the seven (Ac 6:6).
- Church growth: number of disciples kept growing (Ac 6:1); number of disciples in Jerusalem increased (Ac 6:7); a large number of priests believed (Ac 6:7).
- Cultural division: Greek-speaking (Ac 6:1, 5); Hebrew-speaking (Ac 6:1).

Key-attitudes:

- Well-being as seen by growth of number of believers.
- Greek-speaking believers' feeling of discrimination.
- Apostles' resolution to solve the problem.
- Satisfaction by all.

Initial-situation:

The number of believers in Jesus Christ kept growing.

Initial-problem:

Greek-speaking Jewish believers complained against the Hebrew-speaking Jewish believers because the Greek-speaking widows were neglected each day when food was distributed.

Final-situation:

The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly. Even a large number of priests believed and obeyed the faith.

BIBLE STORY

The number of disciples kept growing. Greek-speaking Jewish believers complained against the Hebrew-speaking Jewish believers because Greek-speaking widows were neglected each day when food was distributed.

The twelve apostles gathered all the disciples and said, "It's not right for us to neglect teaching God's word in order to distribute food. Choose seven men among you who have good reputations, are known to be full of the Holy Spirit, and are full of wisdom.

We'll put them in charge of this work; however, we'll give our attention to prayer and teaching God's word."

The suggestion pleased all the believers. They chose seven men, and all had Greek names. Among the chosen were Stephen and Philip. The apostles prayed and placed their hands on the seven (Ac 6:1-6).

The word of God continued to spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly. Even a large number of priests believed and obeyed the faith (Ac 6:7).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What problem developed between the Greek-speaking believers and the Hebrew-speaking believers?
2. How did the apostles show that they viewed the problem as serious?
3. Why didn't the apostles take the responsibility for distributing food to the widows?
4. What did the apostles say was their primary task?
5. What were the requirements for being selected to distribute food to the widows?
6. Why did the church choose Greek-speaking Jews to fill all seven positions?
7. What responsibilities do you have to serve God?
8. Does our church expect our pastors to take on tasks that limit them from teaching and praying?
9. What can we learn from the way the Jerusalem church dealt with the conflict between the Greek-speaking believers and the Hebrew-speaking believers that will help our church deal with problems?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Some church problems come from within the community.** The church in Jerusalem suffered persecution that came from outside the church; however, it also experienced internal problems:
 - Sin in the lives of church members (Ac 5:1-11).
 - Conflict and murmuring within the church community (Ac 6:1-7).
2. **On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit began to correct the confusion that began at the Tower of Babel** (Gen 11:7-9; Ac 2:7-11). The correction is still incomplete. The first confusion in the church in Jerusalem was between the Greek-speaking Jews and the Hebrew-speaking Jews (Ac 6:1).

3. **Believers in Jesus may experience conflict of priorities, and must determine God's priority for their lives.** The apostles experienced a conflict of priorities: The need to help needy widows existed. Also, the apostles needed to give priority to praying and teaching the word of God (Ac 6:1-4).
4. **Every position in the church demands people with spiritual qualifications.** The men selected to distribute food to needy widows were required to have a good reputation, be full of the Holy Spirit, and be full of wisdom (Ac 6:3).
5. **Problems faced and solved, generate new opportunities.** When the confusion in the church in Jerusalem was resolved, the number of believers in Jesus increased (Ac 6:7).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Interactive Sharing:

Greek-speaking Jewish believers complained against the Hebrew-speaking Jewish believers.

Invite listeners to share an occasion where they experienced conflict between people of different cultures.