

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Doctrine and Duty for Disciples Series

Acts of the Apostles

Growing Pains

Acts 6:1-15

Appointing Deacons

Now in those days, when *the number of the disciples* was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. ² 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." ³ Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; ⁴ but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, ⁶ whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. ⁷ Then 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.

Accusations Arise

⁸ And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. ¹⁰ And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. ¹¹ Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." ¹² And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon *him*, seized him, and brought *him* to the council. ¹³ They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; ¹⁴ for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us." ¹⁵ And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

1. What is the difference between *Jews* and *Hellenists*?
2. What are some growing pains of this church? Are growing pains bad for a church? Why or why not?
3. Do think there was a legitimate complaint? Do you think this problem was intentional?
4. Why was it important to seek out seven men?
 - What were the three criteria for this selection? What was the process?
 - Why was each criterion important?
 - Why was it *not desirable* for the apostles to *serve at tables* if this was an important duty?
5. Why was it important to have deacons of the church? What did this enable the apostle to do? What was the results of this?
6. Why does it continue to be important to have deacons?
7. How did each of these *do the right thing*: the Hellenist, the Hebrews, the seven and the apostles?
 - When you see a problem in your church, which role do you play? Do you do the right thing?
8. Steven was *full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people*, then why would he be accused of blasphemy? What were the specific accusations? Who were making them? How was this situation parallel to Jesus' situation? How did Steven handle it?
9. When you hear an accusation made of a brethren and faithful servant of the Lord, how do you handle it?
10. What did you learn from this study and how can you apply this to your growth as a disciple?