

**“Character Over Competence”**  
**Cornerstone Church of Poway**  
**Rich Sherwood**  
**June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**Acts 6:1-7 ESV**

**6** Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists[a] 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,[b] 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.

Notes:

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**“Unstoppable Church”**  
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**1. Unity Through Action (v.1)**

- Summary: The early church was multicultural and growing quickly. That growth brought growing pains—specifically, the neglect of widows who are not from Jerusalem?
- The apostles didn't ignore the tension.

**Reflection Questions:**

- What modern examples can you think of where cultural or linguistic differences create division in the Church?
- How should we respond when someone in the church feels overlooked or unheard?

**2. Servant Leadership and Delegation (v.2–4)**

- Summary: The apostles didn't reject the need—they restructured the responsibility. Delegation wasn't about avoiding service but prioritizing calling.
- True leadership involves recognizing when to empower others to take on meaningful roles.

**Reflection Questions:**

- What does this teach us about the balance between spiritual and practical ministry?
- Are there areas where you might be taking on too much and limiting others' opportunities to serve?
- What role does humility play in effective delegation?

**3. Qualifications for Service (v.3)**

- Summary: Spiritual leadership—even in logistical roles—requires character, spiritual maturity, and wisdom.
- This wasn't just about finding “available hands” but about raising up godly leaders.

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**Reflection Questions:**

- Why do you think the apostles emphasized character over competence?
- What are some signs that someone is full of the Spirit? wisdom?
- How should we disciple people into leadership readiness in our church?

**4. Empowering Others (v.6)**

- Summary: The laying on of hands was a spiritual affirmation—this act unified the church and gave authority to the seven.

**Reflection Questions:**

- Why is it important to publicly affirm and support leaders or volunteers?
- Have you ever felt empowered or affirmed in your spiritual gifts? If not, what would that mean for you?
- How can you help others feel confident in the roles God is calling them to?

**5. Fruitfulness Follows Faithfulness (v.7)**

- Summary: When the church handled internal issues with wisdom and grace, God honored that order. Growth resulted—both in numbers and in depth.

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**Reflection Questions:**

- What connection do you see between healthy church structure and spiritual growth?
- Have you noticed times when internal conflict in the church stalled mission or outreach?
- How can you be part of creating a healthy, Spirit-led church culture?

**General Group Discussion**

Which of the seven verses speaks most directly to your life or ministry right now?

- What changes might God be prompting you to make in how you serve or lead?
- How can your group encourage one another to grow in wisdom, Spirit-filled living, and service?