

ACTS 6.1-7

RESOLVING CONFLICT, PRESERVING CALLING

THE TEMPLATE CHURCH—

Four words characterize the original church, which is God's intended template for every successive church—

(1) Kerygma

“proclamation” (e.g. Luke 4.18-19; Romans 10.14)

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

—Acts 5.42

THE TEMPLATE CHURCH—

(2) Ekklesia

“called-out ones; the assembly of believers” (e.g. Acts 2.47; Ephesians 5.27)

Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!” Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all. . . . And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

—Acts 2.40-41, 47

THE TEMPLATE CHURCH—

(3) Koinonia

“covenantal communion” (e.g. Acts 2.42; Ephesians 3.6)

“a divinely intimate, holy unity among Christ-followers and between them and their Lord—involving everything about their lives”

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.

—Acts 4.32

THE TEMPLATE CHURCH—

(4) Proseuche

“prayer” – pros: “face to face” and euche: “aspiration, desire”

(e.g. Acts 2.42; 4.24; Colossians 4.2)

*They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

—Acts 2.42

THE ISSUE—

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

—Acts 6.1

The *ekklesia* had been confronted with external attacks and threats; now it faced a subversive, satanic internal threat which endangered its very existence as well as its witness.

THE PRIORITIES—

So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

—Acts 6.2-4

Kerygma and *proseuche* were non-negotiable priorities for the church. The issue needed to be resolved without compromising or minimizing the heart of the church’s identity and work.

THE SOLUTION—

“Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom.” This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

—Acts 6.3, 5-6

All spiritual work requires spiritual people or the outcome will be nothing more than what a non-spiritual person can accomplish.

THE RESULT—

So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

—Acts 6.7

The equitable distribution of food was not the ultimate goal; it was the effectiveness of witness resulting in fulfilled obedience to Christ's command to make disciples. As a result of their effective spiritual response, the church became effective in areas where they had not previously been effective.

ACTS 6.1-7

- ▶ Differences and divisions are inevitable because human nature is inherently sinful, self-oriented, and easily manipulated.
- ▶ Divisions and inequalities—especially in the body of Christ—must be addressed for the sake of our spiritual integrity and effectiveness of witness.
- ▶ At their root, all issues of brokenness or inequity are spiritual and require a spiritual response based on spiritual principles.
- ▶ If we have effectively resolved the issue, according to spiritual principles and God's purposes, then we will see the work of God go forward with greater effectiveness.