The Lesson Of The Empowered Church

Message Notes

Today, let's dive into Acts 6:1-7 to discover some crucial lessons about an empowered church.

Passage

Acts 6:1–7 (NLT) — 1 **But as the believers rapidly multiplied**, there were rumblings of discontent. The Greek-speaking believers complained about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. **They said, “We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program**. 3 And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are **full of the Spirit and wisdom**. We will give them this responsibility. 4 Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word.” 5 Everyone liked this idea, and they chose the following: Stephen (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit), Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas of Antioch (an earlier convert to the Jewish faith). 6 These seven were presented to the apostles, **who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them**. 7 So **God’s message continued to spread**. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too.

Sermon Body

Lesson One - Growth Demands Empowerment

- Acts 6:1 (NLT) — 1 But as the believers rapidly multiplied, there were rumblings of discontent.
- *Observation 1: First the problem occurred as the believers multiplied rapidly...An elephant needs bigger bones to support its immense weight, in the same way, the church must be empowered to handle the sheer size of the mission and body.*
- **Analogy:** elephant versus mouse
- **Example of Moses:** We also see this principle at work in the Old Testament. Moses was trying to judge all of Israel himself (Exodus 18). It was an impossible task! His father-in-law, Jethro, advised him to delegate and appoint leaders to help him (Exodus 18:13-26). This illustrates the same concept: with increasing size and scope, the need for structure, leadership, and empowerment becomes absolutely critical.

Lesson Two - Without Empowerment, Drama Happens

- Acts 6:1b (NLT) — The Greek-speaking believers complained about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food.

- *Observation 2: Second, when the church isn't properly empowered, we don't operate as smoothly as we should, people get left out, marginalized, etc.*
- The early church faced issues of neglect due to an uneven distribution of resources, which shows us that if we're not empowered and organized, ministry will suffer.
    1. **First - Missing ministry** without proper leadership and structure, certain ministries are just missing altogether. No prison ministry, no ministry to the elderly, no outreach to young people.
    2. **Second - Misunderstanding** danger here is that things can be misunderstood: "They never called me," "I tried to connect and couldn't." Miscommunications and a lack of clear processes lead to confusion and feelings of being forgotten or ignored. This can hurt individuals and damage the community.
    3. **Third - Drama and disunity** can occur without any really good reason, just simply missing leadership structure. When there is a lack of clear organization and leadership, it creates a vacuum. This void can be filled with unnecessary disputes and a breakdown in unity, stemming from a lack of clear lines of communication and responsibility, and confusion can take place and people become offended without intent.
- Inefficiency leads to some in the body feeling left out or ignored.
- Every member has value and should not be overlooked in ministry.

Lesson Three - No One Can Do Everyone's Job

- Acts 6:2 (NLT) — 2 So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, **"We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program.**
- *Observation 3: Third, it's amazing when each part of the body recognizes that there are appropriate focuses for some that aren't the right focus for others. If we are all focused in the same task, we aren't properly knowing our place and supporting the rest of the body.*
- **We must give one another the permission** to not all do the same thing. God has gifted each of us uniquely, and we take joy in these distinct callings.
    1. "*That's my preacher" "I couldn't do what you do"*
    2. When you do someone else's role
        1. You don't do it well
        2. You burn out
        3. You leave your spot unattended
- **We should celebrate** one another's uniqueness and encourage each other to operate within those gifts.
- So **- Discover your gifting, Follow the Spirit, Get to Serving**
- Analogy: Think of a sports team. You have different players with different positions. The quarterback doesn't try to play every position at once; neither does the point guard try to score every point.

Lesson Four - It's a Spiritual Thing

- Acts 6:3–4 (NLT) — 3 And so, brothers, select seven men who are **well respected** and are **full of the Spirit and wisdom**. We will give them this responsibility. 4 Then we apostles can spend our time in

prayer and teaching the word."

- Acts 6:5–6 (NLT) — 5 Everyone liked this idea, and they chose the following: Stephen (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit), Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas of Antioch (an earlier convert to the Jewish faith). 6 These seven were presented to the apostles, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them.
- *Observation 4: Fourth, in order to do our God given task, we must be full of the spirit and wisdom. Proper empowerment comes from spiritual authority, which recognizes the gift, lays hands on and blesses the empowered.*
- The qualifications for the seven chosen were to be "**well respected, and full of the Spirit and wisdom"** (Acts 6:3).
- But then, **the apostles laid hands on them**, which gave legitimacy to their work. This act of laying on hands was a public affirmation and a spiritual impartation, authorizing them for their specific ministry. It wasn't just a human appointment; it was a recognition and release of God-given gifts through spiritual authority.

Lesson Five - Proper Alignment Leads to Growth

- Acts 6:7 (NLT) — 7 So God''s message continued to spread. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too.
- Ephesians 4:15-16 (NLT) — 15 Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way into Christ, who is the head of the church. 16 From him every part of the body receives its nourishment and **grows as each part joins together and does its part. Through the whole body, the love of Christ is expressed, and the church is built up to the glory of God.**
- Observation 5: Finally, when we are properly aligned, the body begins to move in the right way again.
- After the situation was resolved and the seven were appointed, "God's message continued to spread" (Acts 6:7). This shows the fruit of proper alignment.
- As we see in Ephesians 4:15-16, the benefit that happens when the proper leadership is in place, each part fitting together, is that the entire body grows into Christ. When every part receives nourishment from the Head (Christ) and does its part, the church is built up.
- The fruit of a church well empowered is evident:
    1. **Everyone is properly cared for:** Just as the widows in Acts 6 were eventually cared for when the church aligned its structure, a well-empowered church ensures that the needs of its members are met.
    2. **Everyone has the joy of fulfilling their calling**: When members are recognized, empowered, and have a place to serve, they experience the joy of using their God-given gifts for the Kingdom.
    3. **The mission of the church advances:**
- When the body is operating in its designed structure and purpose, the results are apparent.
- Alignment leads to growth and greater impact for the Kingdom of God.

Closing

- Acts 6:1-7 provides valuable lessons on how an empowered church functions and thrives.

- Every member is vital, and every role is necessary.
- Spiritual empowerment and proper alignment enable us to fulfill God's mission.
- **Call to Action:**
    1. Seek to understand your role in the body of Christ.
    2. Ask God to fill you with His Spirit and wisdom for service.
    3. Support and honor those in leadership and those who serve.
- *"The early church grew not just because of what happened in the pulpit, but because of what happened through the people."*

Pray: For clarity, courage, and commitment to step into spiritual roles and honor the body of Christ, working together in harmony.