

Sunday, Nov 9, 2025
Sierra Vista Community Church, Las Cruces, NM
Acts Sermon Series: Pray Send Go
Leading the Church, Acts 6:1-7

Introduction—Here we are. Today is the Lord's day! God has led us here! We rejoice yet acknowledge the work we have still to be done! We are blessed beyond our capacity to measure! This place is where we meet to "get ready" to do God's work. God has work for us to do! Do you believe that?

How do we go forward in leading the church into this next phase? We do it according to God's purpose for us, SVCC. We can't be like any other congregation; we must be us. We are to do us and not worry what others may be doing in their church. God has His purpose for them as well.

It has come to a time where the need for more leadership must be met. Leaders who love Jesus and love His service. Leaders who aren't in it for the accolades. Leaders who will serve, with or without a title. Leaders who are in agreement with what God is doing at SVCC. This is a critical time in the life of our church. Amen?

As we continue in our Acts series, titled Pray Send Go, we have come to chapter 6, where the church really starts to implement the role of leadership in the local church. So, let's see how they did it in the early church and let us evaluate (if you will) what we can take and implement here at Sierra Vista from the early church, reminding ourselves that we are a different type of church from those of the early church. We are here with the same message, but with a different approach.

Stand and Read—Acts 6:1-7

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.

Pray

1. Leaders Serve—verses 1-3

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;

- A. When the church is doing what God has called them to, it can't help but grow. Every church that follows the call to make disciples will grow in physical numbers and in spiritual growth.
- B. Sometimes, the physical number aren't seen until a later time. Nonetheless, growing the church is the way the Kingdom of God is multiplied.
- C. **Verse 1**—The number of disciples were multiplying.
- D. Disciples aren't just followers. Disciples are learners that follow.
- E. Many people that claim to be a follower of Jesus but have yet to learn a thing about what that requires.
- F. A disciple is someone who is studying, figuring out, and setting their site on a transformative lifestyle that resembles our Lord Jesus Christ.
- G. Lots of followers just start marching along with the crowd, but fewer true disciples, who really want a Christ-like life.
- H. In our text, there are a growing number of disciples, which is where we are trying to go. Making disciples so that SVCC can survive the onslaught of all out Satanic assaults being made against the church and against Jesus, our Lord.
- I. If we just follow without being discipled, we can easily loose our focus and follow something else that may resemble Jesus but is far from it.
- J. **2 Timothy 3:1-5**—But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. **2** People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, **4** treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— **5** having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.
- K. God is being framed into many things that aren't godly at all. There is no power behind it. It isn't God!
- L. When God is the center and is truthfully revealed week after week in the local church, growth happens. It is because of the power of the Holy Spirit, lived out in His disciples.
- M. Church growth can cause growing pains too.
- N. **Verse 1**—with the number of believers growing, there was a real concern that the ones who needed true religion, would be left out.
- O. In this case it was the widows. In those days, the church took care of its own widows, not the government programs.
- P. **James 1:27—27** Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.
- Q. Widows were being neglected and that was a no-no.
- R. So, they did something about it.

- S. **Verse 2**—They summoned the disciples, which means they had a business meeting. Notice they didn't say everyone come to the meeting. No, just those who have leadership possibilities.
- T. The Apostles (Elders) explained the problem. We need help! We are called to teach and preach the Word of God, but we need help with the other service tasks around the church.
- U. The number one thing was that the widows needed help with food. When a woman was widowed in that day and time, there was no more money coming in. The husband was the bread winner of the family, so unless he left a large inheritance, the widow was left alone and poor.
- V. At least the church could help feed them. In our text they said serve tables. Sounds like a menial task, doesn't it? But it wasn't.
- W. This service was so important, that they wanted true disciples of Jesus to do this job.
- X. **Verse 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
- Y. During the business meeting, they took a vote to elect 7 new leaders, which would later be called deacons. This was the first office given a title so that church members would know who the deacons were.
- Z. Peter was probably the first Pastor, and now we have deacons. A deacon is a server.
- AA. Somewhere something happened, where deacons were given other ministry tasks, and some deacons today have forgotten that their first calling is to serve widows, and the needs of the church that at times go unnoticed.

Illustration—What does that mean for us today? Today, the title of deacon can have any different branches to it depending on which church they are at. Some have a more authoritative position than others, but the real question for us today is this: What does a leader have to possess to be in a position of leadership at SVCC? That really is what I want to answer. We are in a new season, it can be easy to neglect the needs of the church.

Here it is for me as leader of churches:

- Above reproach
- Servant heart
- Honesty
- Running after God, not walking
- A love for People
- Humble
- Teachable spirit
- Accountability
- Adaptable

Application—Is God calling you to lead? How would you know? If you don't know, then why not?

2. Leaders are Spirit Filled—verses 4-6

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.

- A. No one can lead in service to Jesus apart from the Spirit of God. It is not possible.
- B. **John 15:5—5** “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.
- C. The 12 Apostles wanted to make clear that as these 7 were being chosen, they would continue to pray and study the Word of God.
- D. If those administering the Word of God, aren’t afforded the time to prepare, the church won’t grow. We need pastors who aren’t just shooting from the hip on Sundays, but who have put in the time to know what God would have them to say.
- E. I remember one of the most amazing things I heard a Pastor say to me one time was this: It isn’t just 1 hour on Sunday that is being given, but it is 700 hours on Sunday. That was the number of people coming to His church.
- F. So, as pastors are preparing the message each week, we are preparing for the number of hours combined, even though it may only happen in an hour time frame.
- G. That is why, choosing leaders who are Spirit-Led is vital.
- H. **Verse 5**—This process please the people. You know why? Because they were still going to be receiving the Word of God, and now they also were going to have more people invited in the ministry than ever before.
- I. Isn’t that exciting?
- J. Who did they choose? Stephen, a man full of the Holy Spirit.
- K. Wouldn’t you like to be described as a person full of the Holy Spirit?
- L. They chose 6 others, one who was a proselyte from Antioch. This means he was a convert from another religion or from no religion.
- M. So, the group was diverse and representing all aspects of the people.
- N. **Verse 6**—These 7 were set before the apostles and were prayed over and by the laying on of hands.
- O. Why did they lay hands on then?
- P. This was a formal commissioning of a new ministry that was sanctioned by the leaders. A meeting aside if you will.

Illustration—What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?

Ephesians 5:15-20

15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the Lord’s will is. 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We live wisely, being happy in Jesus, singing, praying, and giving thanks.

3. Leaders Lead—verse 7

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.

- A. As leaders, we have to do one thing, and that is actually lead.
- B. You can't call yourself a leader if you never lead. (repeat)
- C. **Verse 7**—when leaders really lead, the Word of God spreads! That is the most important thing that we must do! Spread the Word of God.
- D. We can do a lot of things as believers, and a lot of good things, but if we neglect the Word of God, we are just another social club.
- E. We gather, we talk, we eat, we meet, and we leave. That is alright for other gatherings. When we gather and when we lead, it is all about the Word of God!
- F. There is so much talk of declining church attendance and the lack of conversions, and declining baptisms.
- G. It ain't because God is dead, it is because the leaders have died. They forgot how to lead. If we will just stick to the Bible and not sway far from it, God's going to multiply the church. He is fully alive and ready to move His Kingdom into our sphere of influence.
- H. Then in **verse 7**—again, the number of disciples greatly increased! And check this out, Priests were obedient to the faith.
- I. There are leaders who are currently serving God, and they don't even know Him. They serve from a human perspective. They need Jesus too!

Illustration—Matthew 7:21-23

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. **22** Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' **23** Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

Application—Are you called to lead? Are you leading? Why not? Maybe you don't know Jesus as your personal Lord, like some of these priests mentioned here. Today it is time to get right with God. Give Him your heart and your life?

Pray