

November 9, 2014

BECOMING THE CHURCH JESUS ENVISIONS

Keeping The Church On Track

Acts 6:1-7

Something profound happened in the lives of the early church—they became living witnesses to the power and presence of Jesus. The scriptures say they were recognized as people who “... *had been with Jesus.*” Today, we must be a church that bears witness to having been with Jesus. The story in Acts 6 illustrates how problems can arise that have the potential to disrupt what God is doing. We learn from the early church what is needed to keep the church on track to fulfill its mission. Let’s follow their example.

1. **We view everything as opportunities for God to work.**

“In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.” Acts 6:1 (NIV)

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” Galatians 6:10 (NIV)

2. **We take ownership as a church family to work together.**

“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, 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...’” Acts 6:2-3 (NIV)

“...so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” Romans 12:5 (NIV)

“...so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of His one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others.” Romans 12:5 (NLT)

3. **We stay focused on the priorities.**

“We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.” Acts 6:3-4

a. **Prayer** – **“We meet with Jesus”**

b. **The Word** – **“We obey and proclaim Jesus”**

c. **People** - **“We love and serve like Jesus”**

4. **We make ministry happen!**

“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. So the word of God spread.” Acts 6:5-7 (NIV)

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” Romans 12:6-11 (NIV)

5. **We celebrate the blessings God will bring!**

“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 (NIV)

6. **We repeat the process until Jesus returns!**

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. **What problems can I see as opportunities for God to work?**
2. **Where can I be more involved with the church family?**
3. **Are my priorities in line with Jesus?**
4. **How has Jesus gifted me to serve His church?**