

TAKEAWAY

EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE



Part Twelve: Acts 6:1-7

At Maybridge we want to be a church of disciples who make disciples – we hope this takeaway session encourages practical outcomes in the lives of the individuals in your group. The focus of group discussion should be on becoming 'doers of the word' and not just hearers or people who enjoy a good discussion!

INTRODUCTION

At the heart of the New Testament book known as 'Acts', is *a message for everyone everywhere, about a person who is for everyone everywhere*. Our hope as we continue in our series, is to try to understand it, in context, and then think about what it has to say to us as followers of Jesus today.

So far in our journey through Acts, the early church has experienced rapid growth and has witnessed and performed many miraculous signs and wonders. We rejoin the account of the early church as the apostles address a dispute and appoint leadership to give oversight to a practical issue.

SHARE

- Who is your favourite fictional team and why?
- What's something you think you're good at but where other people might disagree?
- What differences have you appreciated about Christians from a background very different from your own, why do you appreciate them?

READ

Acts 6:1-7

DISCUSS

What stands out to you most in this passage? Why do you think it's in the Bible?

What is the dispute among the believers of the early church (verse 1-2) and how do the apostles deal with it (verse 2-6)?

The dispute was between Hellenistic and Hebraic Jews who were followers of Jesus. Why do you think cultural differences can sometimes create tension even among God's people?

EXPLAIN

Hebraic Jews were native-born Palestinian Jews, who spoke Aramaic as their mother tongue. Hellenists or Grecian Jews were non-native Jews from other parts of the world who would have returned to Jerusalem years later or after generations away.

The seven men chosen were 'well spoken of and filled with the Spirit and wisdom' (verse 3), Stephen was also described as a man 'full of faith and the Holy Spirit' (verse 5), qualities that seem more "spiritual" than practical. Why are those qualities needed in ministering to people of varied backgrounds where there is tension?

The task of distributing food might seem less spiritually important than things like preaching and prayer. What does this passage say about how God views different kinds of service?

Where might we need to change our understanding of what "ministry" looks like in order to view all the different ways people serve as equally valuable?

The majority group appears willing to entrust responsibility to people from the minority group. What does healthy sharing of power look like in a Christian community?

What did the apostles do that was wise? See how many things you can point out.
What happens to the church as a result of the apostles' actions (verse 7)?

Taking Acts 6:1-6 as our example, what are some possible ways to bridge divisions in church life?

Whilst this is a great example of church leadership, why is it unwise to think that good structures automatically produce spiritual growth? How do we ensure not to do this?

Sunday's message suggested that church growth sometimes requires change and restructuring.

- How do you personally tend to respond when something familiar needs to change?
- What changes might we as a church need to be willing to embrace if they could help more people hear about Jesus?

The gospel should "permeate everything about us." What would it look like for Jesus to shape an area of your life that you don't normally think of as "spiritual"?

TRY OUT

- Consider who and how you might encourage someone in the church family with different giftings from yourself – send them an encouraging message, say thank you when you see them serve, pray for them or offer help and support.
- What's one practical way to put into practice the things you've discussed and learn't? Perhaps an area of your life you don't see as "spiritual" that you'd like Jesus to shape or a change to your habits and rhythms to help more people hear about Jesus?

PRAY

Pray for anything that has come up in your discussion and ask for the Holy Spirit's help in living out what you've discussed and learn't together – that the gospel would permeate everything about you.