

Church – The Beginnings, Part 16

Simply Biblical Church Leadership

Acts 6:1-7 | 02/12/2017

NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP

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Links to Our Current Teaching Series and Previous Teachings:

Current Series: Church, The Beginnings → NLFJI.org/ACTS

Sections in Acts up to this point and a little peek ahead (similar to “episodes”):

Acts 1 → Transition from the Gospels to just before the day of Pentecost

Acts 2 → The Day of Pentecost, Peter’s Preaching, and the forming of the first church of Jesus Christ

Acts 3:1 – 4:31 → The Healing in the Temple (Miracles), More Gospel Preaching, More folks saved, Persecution and More Preaching of the Gospel

Acts 4:32 – 5:42 → Community of Faith, Finances, God’s Judgment against Ananias & Sapphira, Gospel Preaching, Miracles, Persecution, More Preaching, Community of Faith

Acts 6:1 thru 8:4 → Church Leadership Challenges, the Testimony & Martyrdom of Stephen, Scattering

Simply Biblical Church Leadership Structure – Simple, Biblical, God-Pleasing:

1. Growth Pains and Challenges when God is blessing with multiplication of disciples:

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. (Acts 6:1)

This snapshot is quite a while after Acts 2 (Pentecost), years after. The Jerusalem church had grown exponentially. Within that huge body of believers, they developed “ministries” that served the poor among them, in this case **Widows**. There was no government-sponsored “welfare”, so the church took up this challenge. Being outcasts from the **synagogue network**, which normal took care of the widows and orphans, per Old Testament teachings, they developed this on their own: **to obey God**. But there were also **ETHNIC, LINGUISTIC Divisions** as well. This Division is **NEVER Addressed**. No effort to try to make everyone the same, Ethnically. **No effort** to → we just need to all be **ONE** in everything, including our Cultural/Ethnic ways, etc. (ref. 1 Tim. 5:3-16 – caring for widows was a ministry with policy)

Hebrews and Hellenists → Hebrews → Those who were **natives to the land of Israel**, grew up there, spoke Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek (and maybe Latin) (in that order). **Natives to Israel**

Hellenists: Those folks from outside of Israel – Genetic Israelis, as well as Gentile Proselytes (converts to Judaism) – but **reside outside** the land of Israel and who have native, heart-languages other than Aramaic/Hebrew (a partial list of countries of origin is in **Acts 2:5,9-11**) These folks spoke a common Trade Language: **Greek** (Hellenistic = Greek).

2. The Apostles’ role was that of Pastoral Elders (see verses on the back of this sheet)

Their role of Eldership / Overseeing the Congregation involved: (Acts 6:2,4)

This is the **IDEAL GOAL** of every congregation for their own **Pastoral Elders**

To allow their Elders to be **freed up**, to give themselves continually (without distraction) to:

- a. **Prayers** (Praying over the people and leadership of the local church family)
- b. **The Ministry of the Word** (study, preparation, preaching, teaching, proclaiming)

3. Qualified Leadership – DEACONS (Acts 6:3-6; ref. 1 Timothy 3:8-13)

The **Answer to the Crisis** was **Qualified Leadership**. More leadership, under the authority of the **elders**. In the OT: **Moses & 70 Elders - AND - the Leaders of 1000’s, 100’s, 50’s and 10’s** (ref. Exodus 18:13-26). The Apostles were using that same **MODEL** of Leadership levels. **Deacons are equivalent to the Leaders of 1000’s, 100’s, 50’s, and 10’s** (‘a Factor of 5’)

4. The **RESULT** was **MORE**, Exponentially **MORE**, Multiplication of Disciples: (Acts 6:7)

Notice: This happened **BECAUSE:** “**The WORD OF GOD SPREAD**”

It was as though **The Word of God** was held back **UNTIL** this issue was resolved.

The WORD of the **GOD** was **Freed UP** from **Bickering** and **Complaining** and it **resulted** in more folks becoming, **born again, disciples of Jesus Christ**.

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. ²Then 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. ³Therefore, 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; ⁴but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

⁵And 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, ⁶whom 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.**

Ephesians 4:11-16 - And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers (i.e.: *pastoring teachers*), ¹²for the **EQUIPPING of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴that we should NO LONGER be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of DECEITFUL plotting, ¹⁵but, speaking the truth in love, may GROW UP in all things into Him who is the head — Christ — ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part DOES ITS SHARE, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.**

1 Peter 5:1-7 -- The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a FELLOW ELDER and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ² SHEPHERD THE FLOCK OF GOD which is among you, serving as OVERSEERS, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³ nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; ⁴ and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

⁵Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

⁶Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

For the Qualifications of ELDERS and DEACONS ...

Please see 1 Timothy 3:1-13 (Elders Qualifications – 1 Tim. 3:1-7 / Deacons: 3:8-13)

Parallel Elder Qualifications → Titus 1:5-9

How the Biblical Community of Faith in Christ is supposed to be relate to their Elders:

Hebrews 13:7,17 → submit to, follow, and obey our Elders

1 Timothy 5:17-20 → Respect and Honor them; and hold our Elders accountable, as well

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 → Recognize our Elders, allow them to admonish us, esteem them highly for their labor, and be at peace with them and each other.

For more on this, please, go to: <https://NLFJI.org/ELDERS>