

Acts 6:1-7 – ‘Keeping the main thing the main thing’ – Discussion Guide

Internal pressure threatens the progress of the gospel just as much as external pressure. This issue this complaint about the care of widows in the Jerusalem church needs to be addressed or the teaching of Jesus and his kingdom will suffer. Paul says it best in 1Timothy 3:15 when he says that the way we behave as a household or (local church family) is what upholds and supports the Gospel.

However, the work involved in caring for widows threatens to keep their best teachers so busy they would have no capacity for the work of carefully teaching about Jesus in public and from house to house.

Resolving this issue requires more than the individual efforts of a few gifted leaders it requires the church family. Just like in any healthy family, in order to keep the main thing the main thing and function properly, responsibilities must be shared. The Apostles appointed a small team of leaders from within the church family to manage and lead in areas of practical care in order to support the unity and quality of the church family and free up other leaders to focus on the essential ministry of the word and prayer.

- They chose people who had already submitted to the teaching and community life of the church.
- They chose seven men who showed evidence of having a good reputation with people, the holy spirit at work in their lives, and skill in living wisely.
- They confirmed their responsibility for the care of Widows and commissioned them before the rest of the church family so that the whole church understood their role and could work with them.

One of the things that helps facilitate the progress of the gospel, is when the local church family is ordered well, multiplying it's leaders, and working together as a team so that there is a balance between meeting practical needs and prioritizing the ministry of the word and prayer.

Questions to guide discussion:

1. Why is it important for a healthy church to prioritize the ministry of the word and prayer as they care for one another and pursue good works? What might happen if a local church doesn't do this?
2. What are some possible reasons why churches today find it so difficult to have an appropriate balance between good works and the priority of the word and prayer? What can we learn from how the Apostles handled this issue?
3. How can you personally support and be involved in the teaching ministry of your local church? Are there some ways you can help free up those in your church whose primary responsibility is the careful teaching of God's word and prayer?