

ONE CHURCH: A Study of the Book of Acts

Part 5: Community and Conflict Acts 6:1-7

Introduction:

Conflict. While conflict is generally something we do not enjoy, and even work hard to avoid, it is also something everyone experiences. It can range from a minor disagreement to global warfare. Share a few stories of conflict you have experienced.

After several people have shared, discuss these questions: What was the cause of the conflict in each story? What are some themes you see in the various causes of conflict? Do you think there are a few core causes to most conflicts humans experience?

Read Acts 6:1-7

As a group, briefly retell, the story of conflict in Acts 6:1-7.

Who are the characters/groups in this account? Take a moment to remind yourselves of the differences between the Hellenistic and the Hebraic Jews.

What were the causes of the conflict?

What was the resolution?

This conflict arose because of an injustice. Take a moment and try to imagine what it would have been like to be overlooked. Have you ever been overlooked? Describe that experience and allow it to inform your understanding of the conflict in this text.

Identify the specific actions the believers took to respond to this injustice in their community? What do you notice about the way they responded?

Conclusion:

Left to go its own way, conflict will escalate. In the church, we desire to reject the downward spiral of conflict and embrace the virtuous cycle of blessing instead. What injustices in our world trouble you most? What can you learn from the church in Jerusalem about how you might respond to injustice today? Remember, it is not the job of any individual (or even of any one church) to fight every injustice in the world, but it is our job to fight the injustices God calls us to fight.

When you consider the call to blessing instead of conflict, where in your life are you at risk of seeing conflict escalate? What would it look like to choose to bless instead?

Extra discussion, time allowing. We have talked a lot over the past year about the scene from Exodus in which God tells Moses that he hears the cry of his people and he will confront the injustice of Pharaoh. We have summarized that passage from Exodus 3 by saying that **we serve a God who hears and responds to the cry of hurting people**. What parallels do you see between Exodus 3 and Acts 6?