

Acts 6: First Response to the Holy Spirit's Moving Forward

I. Introduction

The condition of the church was perfect as recorded in the first five chapters — full of influence and impact. Nonetheless, all the responsibilities of service fell only on a few — the apostles. As far as the principle of body service is concerned, it was not enough and not complete. The Holy Spirit had to lead the church toward the goal, and therefore there was some response necessary amid the circumstances.

II. The Expansion of Service (vv. 1–7)

- A. Urgency of the circumstances — complaints (internal imbalance) and difficulties arose
- B. The apostles needed to give their attention to prayer and the ministry of the word
 - 1. Had no time to wait on tables
 - 2. Could not allow spiritual service to be diminished
- C. The establishing of deacons — the apostles laid their hands on and established seven deacons
 - 1. Stephen was a vessel specially chosen by the Holy Spirit for a greater spiritual response
 - 2. Philip was a hidden vessel
- D. The increase of the supply of the word — in the first five chapters, it was only a few apostles who spoke, but now anyone who had gifts spoke
 - 1. The word of God spread
 - 2. Spiritual influence increased — the number of the disciples increased and priests obeyed the faith

III. Stephen's Ministry and Influence (vv. 8–15)

- A. Equipped by God
 - 1. Well spoken of
 - 2. Full of the Holy Spirit
 - 3. Full of wisdom
 - 4. Full of faith
 - 5. Full of grace and power — did great wonders and miraculous signs
- B. Strong and powerful debate — people were not able to stand up against him
 - 1. People from the synagogues argued with him
 - 2. Stephen spoke with wisdom and by the Holy Spirit
- C. The persecution of the enemy
 - 1. Men were persuaded to accuse Stephen and bear false witness
 - 2. He shone under the persecution of the enemy — his face was like that of an angel