

November 3rd, 2024

## Acts 6:1-7 - The Serving Church (Sermon Transcript)

When I was in middle school, high school, I had the worst growing pains. Anybody have just growing pains like Colton's raising his hand. He's dealing with it. Yeah, he got that from me, I'm sorry, bud. I would wake up in the middle of the night with. Like the worst cramps in my calves and I'm like, man, I, you just, and of course I'd go and just wake my dad up and I'm like, what's going on?

He just go back to bed, right? Which is also what I've said to Colton too, a couple of times, right? So these groin pains, if but your body is, you're expanding, it's growing. You've got the muscles are hurting. Your bones are growing. I don't know why it happens overnight, can't happen in the middle of the day, but it hurts.

And if you know that pain of the growing pains, that's a good thing. In the moment you're like, this is awful. Why are my legs hurting so badly? But growing pains are good. And when we get to Acts chapter 6, we're going to see that the early church is going through some growing pains. They're about to deal with some things that on the surface look painful and harmful.

But when you look at it, it's actually good because the church is growing and you need to work through some different things. In Acts chapter six, there's a point where this growing pain could lead to division or it could become a point of growth. And in this passage that we're going to read, the early church says, we're not going to let this growing pain become a point of division.

We're going to. See it for what it is, the growth that it's going to bring us, and it turns into the establishment of the deacons in the church. The church is not immune to needing help, and when help is needed, the church stands to serve one another. God's called us to serve others the same way Christ came to serve us, by willingly and inconveniently dying for the sins of the world.

Let's read our main passage of scripture today, Acts 6, 1 through 7, and then we will respond to the reading of God's word together. Now, in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint Everybody's favorite word right? Complaints by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.



And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, It is not right that we should give up the preaching of the Word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.

And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, not Pumba, but Parmenas, and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem. And a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. This is the word of the Lord. Father, open our hearts to behold the wonderful truths in your word. What a gracious gift it is to belong to a local church and live together with brothers and sisters whom you have purchased with your blood and made your own.

This is not our church. It is yours. And in your sovereign plan, you are building her the way you intended. Use us to serve one another. In your name we pray amen. We see in the first part of the book of Acts, chapters one through five, we see the early church thriving. You even see this in verse one.

The early church is growing, it's multiplying, it's spreading everywhere. A lot has happened in chapters 1 through 5. And even in all of that, they're united together, there's peace. Even when they're dealing with sin, with Ananias and Sapphira in chapter 5, when they lie about their generosity and they drop dead in the middle of the church service, they're unified in this.

But when we get to something, the chapter 6, something different happens. There's a shift in, in the church and you can even see this in the very first word that Luke uses. He uses the word now. It's shifting our focus to, hey, something, something's changing here. Let's draw our attention and hone in on this story.

Now as the church was growing, that's something we're celebrating, right? But there's a complaint that comes up. Everybody's favorite word, complaint. You can see the Hellenist. These are Greek speaking Jews who are now Christians. They see that the widows are being neglected. This is a problem in the church.

These people. Ladies are not being provided for like they should. And so the Hellenists, the Greek speaking Jews, saw this, and they complain, and they grumble to the Hebrew Christians. The other day at the baseball field, we had a situation,



and it was nothing, and then another mom from another team mentioned something to one of our coaches, and it was ridiculous.

And one of our players, I just love what he said. He says, I've never seen a Karen in the wild. And I chuckled. I'm like, I'm using that in my sermon on Sunday. Because so often we, our culture just wants to find something and complain about it. We love complaining about things. We'll complain about traffic.

We'll complain about when they tear out the road. We'll complain about, The temperature in a room, we just, we find something and we want to complain about it. But complaining is not always a bad thing. There are some things worth complaining about, some things we shouldn't complain about.

But we don't love to hear complaints. We have a hard time just working through that. And in this story, whether the Hellenists are complaining from a good heart or bad heart, we're not really sure. There's two types of complaints that we see within the life of a church. We have a complaint out of concern, For the good of the church and the glory of God.

Then we have a complaint out of concern for the good of self and the glory of God, and the glory of self. Two types of complaints. One's really out of concern for God, and the other is out of concern for self. We're not really sure the posture of the Hellenist. Whether they're grumbling and this is ridiculous, and they're not involving themselves, or it's a legitimate concern that they have though.

These widows should be taken care of. So when it comes to the life of the church, complaining is not bad as long as the complaint is out of concern for the good of the church and out of the glory of God. Let me give you two examples. Recently I was having a conversation with someone about an issue they were having at their church.

This individual had some complaints, we'll use the word, about their music, some things at music, and this person Instead of going to the pastors of the church, the leaders, decides to post everything on Facebook. Yeah. Which just makes it worse because now it's leading to division. What are you doing? What it, so this, I'm talking to this person, I said they shouldn't be doing anything else anymore.

That's not how we complain. And the complaint was all about self and preferences and what they wanted. Now, a few years ago, that would be that second style of complaint where it's about self. A few years ago, we sang a song on Sunday morning, staying in the same genre of music. We sang a song on Sunday morning,



and then someone approached me afterwards and said, Hey, Pastor Matt, I have some concerns about this song and some of the lyrics.

And they came from a good heart, they brought up the concern, and I had not thought through that concern theologically, and I said, I hear your point, that's valid, because it comes from a concern for the good of the church. And for the glory of God. We don't want to sing songs that may be theologically inaccurate.

We have not sang that song since. That's out of a concern for the glory of God and for the good of the church. So here in this text we see, hey, there's things that we need to mention. There's things that need to come up. But we do so not to drive division, but for the unity of the local church. A church united together in Jesus does not let a problem divide, but uses it as an opportunity to grow.

Amen. When I was having those growing pains growing up, one of the things my dad would say when I'd go with, go to him, he said, let's just cut it off. Have you, dad ever, you've ever heard a dad say that? Oh, my hand hurts, let's just chop it off. Alright, we'll deal with the pain. What does that do, if my chop, I had a growing pain and I chopped the leg off, what is that actually gonna do?

It's gonna make it worse, it's gonna cause division. And this is how we often think, we just want to limit, cause, just, Dramatically draw attention to Something that may not be worth dividing over. So the apostles bring the whole church together. They said, alright, we recognize this problem. The widows need to be provided for.

They need to be a part of the daily distribution for food. But there's a second problem that we see in this text. Second problem is the apostles don't have the capacity to participate in this need. They say it's not right for us to give up the preaching of God's word. So we got two problems. One. The widows need to be provided for.

They don't dismiss this need. The people don't come to the apostles and the apostles don't say, this is ridiculous, get over it, move on. No, they recognize this is something that needs to be addressed. This is something that we need to deal with. We need to serve these ladies in our church. But we can't do it.

We can't give up the preaching of God's word to accomplish this. And at the early church adapts and grows, we see an incredible truth become into fruition here in Acts chapter 6. It is the responsibility of the entire church to carry out the ministry of the local church. The apostles step back and say, we can't do it all.



It's not right for us to give up the preaching of God's word to serve tables. They're not saying we're too good to serve tables. They recognize there is a need that needs to be met. But we can't do it because we are committing to the preaching of God's Word, but someone else can do this Why don't we equip other people to serve?

Others inside the local church so that we can continue praying and preaching Have you ever been a part of a group project at work or at school? I hate group projects I'm going to say this, okay? And it's not because I don't like working with people. I like working with people. I don't like working with people in a group who don't want to do any of the group work.

You know what I'm talking about? You've got this project and there's always one person that's going to get 100 percent of the credit and do 0 percent of the work. All the time. And it's infuriating. You get that feeling, right? This should not be the case in the church. It should not rely, the work of the church does not rely on one person or two people.

It is the whole body coming together and participating in the work group project of the local church. It's not right for just 20 percent of the people to do 100 percent of the work. It's not right for just a few people. What's right is God says, hey, I've gifted everybody in such a way to serve one another for my glory.

And for the good of the church, 1 Corinthians 12, 14 through 20 says, For the body does not consist of one member, but of many. Imagine for a second. We'll come back to those verses. Imagine for a second. Throughout the New Testament, the church is illustrated by the body. Imagine if my body was just a head.

It would be weird, wouldn't it? This is this some type of Halloween illustration? No! It would be weird. And now imagine for a second, on Sunday mornings, I came here, and I'm preaching my sermon. But there's no one else here. For one, that's weird. Two, it's not how a body is intended to function.

We need one another. Let's keep reading in verse Corinthians. For the body does not consist of one member, but of many. If the foot should say, because I'm not a hand, I do not belong to the body. That would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body.

That would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be?



As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. We are a body of local believers. Different personalities, different giftings, different just interests, different preferences. And yet, each one of us has a particular and important role in the life of a local church. The local church just doesn't function because of one person.

It functions when all of us working together for the glory of the God, and for the good of the church, and for the gospel advancement in our community, Come together and said we're serving one another just the same way Christ has served us Everyone here has a role. If you're a member of Grace Life Church, you have a role in our church You have a role in some capacity.

Sometimes it takes some times for us to figure out what that looks like It takes some time to just say what you're gifting. Sometimes you try a different a couple things You're like I am not cut out for the nursery That is not my put me at the door handing out church programs, but not the nursery You

But we need nursery workers, don't we? They're serving back there these babies that we love. Kid life right now, we need those nursery workers just as we need people at the door, handing and welcoming, as we need musicians to sing, as we need preachers. Everyone who's a member of Grace Life Church plays a role in the church, and one role is not greater than the other.

God's equipped all of us with different gifts, different callings, to serve one another for His glory and our good. Not everyone here is called to be the main preacher on Sunday mornings. I know most of you probably, the idea of standing up here and doing this frightens you more than anything you just saw this past Thursday, right?

The idea, and here's the reality. This, I, there's a instant nervous I get when I walk up here that I work through and then I'm going, right? If you put me behind a microphone and tell me to sing a solo, there's good chance I'm probably gonna need a new pair of pants, alright? Let me just say that.

It, it is frightening. Even this close, I'm like, I don't want to get close to that. I might have to sing. I don't want to sing. That's not my gifting. It would be awful for our church if I were to stand there and let sing. Because that's not my role. But there is a role. And there's a role for you.

And we want to help you find that role because we see that play out in Acts chapter 6. We see the two problems. But there is a solution to this in this story. The Apostles call everyone together and just say we've got a problem. It needs to be addressed. This is a strategy issue. We've got a system breakdown.



The church cannot move forward if we do not address this. We, it is vital to us that we serve these widows. We need to serve them, but the Apostles recognize we can't do this. We don't have the capacity. We can't give up the preaching of God's Word. So they institute something through the Holy Spirit wisdom, something that changes the life of the church, the establishment of deacons.

Now in Acts chapter 6, we don't see the word deacon. We see the word servants. But that word deacon, it literally means servant. So that's the whole purpose of the role in office of deacon. The Apostles go to a church, explain that it's not right for them to serve the tables, but agree the tables need to be served.

So they provide the solution, and it's in verses 3 and 4. It's not right for us to give up the preaching of God's Word. Therefore, brothers, pick out among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.

They understand for just a moment we need to stop preaching, address this problem with a solution, so we can continue on preaching and prayer, and that the widows will be fed and provided for. I want to explain the solution from Acts chapter 6 with how we're structured at Grace Life Church. This is like a little bit of orientation.

I've learned that you just can't assume that everybody knows how we operate behind the scenes and what it looks like. And so from this passage, and why we're going through this series, is hey, this is how our, as our church is growing, this is what we're working through, this is how we operate.

Grace Life Church functions as a Jesus led, elder guided, and congregationally affirmed church. Church. We talk about this in our members meeting. We believe, and we'll break these things, these different sections, Jesus led, elder guided, and congregationally affirmed church. In scripture, we see there are two offices in the local church.

The office of the pastor elder, or shepherd, and the office of the deacon. And not everybody holds one of those offices. There are the apostles and the seven men mentioned in Acts chapter 6, but then there's a whole church that's participating in this. The whole church calls and finds these different people to serve in this capacity.

This is the congregation affirming the Lord's work through the apostles and through the life of the deacons. That's why we have the members meeting. We come together, work through a budget, but we don't just say, this is what we're



doing. No, we want congregation participation when it comes to The life of our church and as we look through that, it first starts Grace Life Church functions as Jesus led.

If you remove those two words, Grace Life Church ceases to be a church. It begins and ends with Jesus. Jesus is the head of the church. Colossians 1:18 says, And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. If you remove the head off of a body what happens?

There is death. We see this in Revelation chapter 2 in the church in Ephesus. They removed a love for Jesus. They walked away from Jesus and this church is dying. A church without Jesus is a dead church. Do we understand the significance of this? We remove Jesus from the equation? That's a problem. We are a Jesus led church.

As we've reiterated throughout the book of Acts, this study, the last couple weeks, That we're nothing without Jesus. We're here because of Jesus. Jesus bought us by his blood, by dying on the cross for our sins, and defeating death and sin by rising again three days later, and then forgiving us of our sins and welcoming us into the family of God.

We are nothing without Jesus. Nothing without Jesus. He is the head of the church. When the kids were little, they would ask me every once in a while, they're just Colton, really, just as he was getting older, he would say, Dad, who is your boss? You see those connections with, I knew I would ask the same question of my dad growing up, and he would just say, Pam is my boss.

And I'm like, I don't know, Pam, but I hope you do a good job for her. Because for Colton, he sees the church, and he's thinking through these, he's Dad, who's your boss? And I would be like, Jesus, I don't know how to answer, it's different from a church perspective, but this, the thing is, I am not the head of the church.

The pastor elders are not the head of the church. The church is not the head of the church. Jesus is the head of the church. He always has been and He always will be. And to remove Him is death to the church. And while Christ always sits at the head of the table, in His sovereignty and in His desire to build the church, He has established two offices to serve the church.

The office of the pastor elder or shepherd. The Office of the Deacon. Let's look at that first office, the Office of Pastor Elder. And we use that phrase, this is the language we use, if you go to our website and it says, it'll say Pastor Elders. And





there's me, and Pastor Ben. He was playing the drums earlier, and he's got multiple giftings.

That's one of them. He's not scared to do that. I'm not scared to do that. It'd be a lot of fun, but it'd be awful, alright? And we operate as Pastor Elders. We use the word, Pastor Elders, Specifically, because when we look at scripture we do not see a single person as a pastor. We see what's called a plurality of elders, meaning that Pastor Ben and I right now, and as we continue to raise up more pastor elders, we see ourselves as on the same level.

He is not an assistant pastor. I am NOT his boss. We share the role of shepherding. He is just as much a pastor as I am, and I'm thankful for that. We we work together. To shepherd our church. Now, in scripture, we would see this as elders. But in our context, in the South, when we think of the word elder, it does not translate to how we understand scripture.

It's been hijacked in a couple different ways. It's taken a circle back to what the Bible says, which is great. So a lot of people, when they think of the word elder, they'll think of the Mormon church, or in different capacities. And that's not how we operate. There's nobody, there's no board above us. We are pastor elders.

So we use this to understand, hey, Pastor Ben and I, we're on the same level. We're on the same team, different giftings, different focus points. I'm the main speaker here. We work together to help shepherd the church, but we use that word pastor to help us understand in a context situation what a pastor is.

So if Pastor Ben were to get up here and just say, church, this is what we're doing. The church, according to Scripture, says, okay, we recognize the authority that we've placed on you and that God has called you to do. If it's following the word of the Lord and it's wise and Pastor Ben, we're on board.

Which means when we make decisions as a church, moving forward, Pastor Ben and I are in agreement on it. There is nothing we do if the two of us are disagreeing. There is no division between us. We have different viewpoints, different preferences, but if we're leading the church, guiding the church as our previous definition says, then we have to be on the same page.

So here is our job description. God has called qualified pastor elders to preach God's Word to God's people, shepherds, shepherd God's flock, and to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry. We'll leave that definition there for a little bit, because we'll break it down. The first one, God has called qualified pastor elders.



Not just everybody gets to be a pastor elder, okay? There are some qualifications in scripture. First Timothy 3, 1 through 7, gives us those qualifications. And listen to them, alright? Because as a church, you're to hold us accountable to this. I want you to see this is a serious matter. That we're just not above everybody else.

We're not untouchable. Those pastors that operate that way, usually you hear a terrible story that follows. This is who we are to be. This is character traits of the pastor elders. In fact, you'll only see one skill set in this qualification. The saying is trustworthy. If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, that's another word for pastor, shepherd, elder that we see throughout interchangeably throughout the New Testament, he desires a noble task.

Therefore, an overseer must be above reproach. The husband of one wife, sober minded, self controlled. Respectable, hospitable, able to teach. That's the skill set there. Not a drunkard, not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well with all dignity, keeping his children submissive.

Let's just stop there for a second. When you applied for your job on that job description, did it say Your kids better be well behaved. Can I just tell you there as a dad who loves my kids and as a pastor? This is not, I'm stepping off the soapbox here a little bit, okay? This is a consistent over life principle.

My kids are not perfect. They never will be. And if you demand something from my children that you do not demand of your own, that is ungodly. I'm just gonna make that statement right now as a dad. All right? There's this whole stigma around pastor's kids that I think is unwarranted because of this verse taken out of context.

This is putting it on the, if a pastor cannot handle his own children and cannot care for them and provide for them, then he's not qualified. This does not mean the kids are perfect. Am I good there? Alright, I only get so many opportunities to read this passage of Scripture. I'm gonna take that opportunity to say that, okay?

Let's keep going. He must not be a recent convert. Where he may become puffed up with the conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace into the snare of the devil. This is the qualifications of a pastor elder.

And this is the qualifications of a pastor elder at Grace Life Church. Essentially, what it's saying, when you read through these things, these lists, is that a pastor elder should look like Jesus. Should we not want our leaders to look like Jesus? There is a weight to this. I feel the weight and responsibility of not just living my life for the



glory of God, but I know that if the devil were to get a hold of my life, the impact it has on people.

And so I want to watch over my life. And so this is why Pastor Ben and I, it's not just me, it's not just a solo mission here. We hold each other accountable. We help guard our hearts. Which means in the pastor elder character is more important than competency. You can have the greatest speaker, greatest preacher of all time, and they could be a moral failure.

You have a great man who has great character, who may not be the great speaker, and God emphasizes that. I'm not perfect by any means. I'm striving to follow Jesus just like you are. But if we see a pastor elder over time not following this list, then we would say they are disqualified and they should not be a pastor elder.

Second thing we see in that definition, the qualified pastor elder preaches God's Word to God's people. 2 Timothy 4, 1-4 says, Paul says to Timothy, preach the Word. Be ready to preach it. In season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort God's Word to God's people. I would say this is my primary responsibility at Grace Life Church.

That every week, about 42 weeks out of the year, I'm gonna stand right here and preach God's Word to you. You are God's people, you're not my people, you're God's people. This is my favorite thing to do in all the world. The weeks that I don't get to preach, and I get to sit here and watch some of you preach, Man, I love that.

But there, I'm sitting in that chair, I'm like, Man, I wish I was preaching, because I love preaching God's Word. It's a joy. Because you need God's Word, just like I need God's Word. The qualified pastor elder preaches God's Word to God's people. Third, the qualified pastor elder shepherds God's people. In Acts chapter 6, the disciples pray and they're concerned for the people in their church, for these widows.

To shepherd is simply to care for, to provide, and to protect. This is a part of the responsibility of the pastor elder. Just like they can't forsake the preaching of God's Word. They say we can't forsake the prayers. This is a praying for people, a shepherding component. This means that, this is why we go on hospital visits.

And there's counseling, and there's encouragement. And just like a shepherd would do to his sheep, if a wolf comes in, a shepherd gets to beat the tar out of that wolf. It is my responsibility, alongside Pastor Ben, to protect the church. Now, I've never gotten to beat anybody with a shepherd's stick. I hope I never get to, but it is in the job qualifications.



If you see me working on, just out in the front yard with a shepherd's stick, you know I'm just preparing, okay? Just kidding, alright? But am I? You gotta be ready, you never know. Fourth, the qualified pastor elder equips God's people. In this story in Acts chapter 6, the apostle says, Hey, we need to find men that are qualified to do this job, and let's equip them to do the work of the ministry.

This is the purpose of the church. Ephesians 4:11 through 14 says Jesus gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up the body of Christ until we all attain the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be tossed, children tossed to and fro by the waves carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes.

The church, the shepherds, equip the church to do the work of the ministry because it's not just our responsibility to do the work of the ministry, of the church. Pastoral responsibilities take up a lot of time. There's already not enough time in the week to write a sermon. It takes probably 10 to 12 hours every week.

And then thinking about other sermons and the pastoral responsibilities and prayer and studying and equipping leaders, that's a lot of time. And I'm a bivocational pastor, meaning that I have a job outside of Grace Life Church. That requires, right now, about 25 to 30 hours outside of this time. Pastor Ben is more hours outside of the church.

Meaning that, hey, we only have 24 hours, we want to use that wisely. We want to put that to the preaching of God's Word, the studying of God's Word, the prayer, the pastoring responsibilities. Which means, in order for the church to operate, we need the whole church involved, serving one another. And the apostle says, we don't have the time or capacity to do this.

But there are some good, solid men in our church who do. That God's going to use for great things. And we're introduced to the office of the deacon. God has called qualified servant leaders to lead others with humility and Christ like character with a passionate desire to serve the church as Christ has served us.

These men, in Acts 6, and in our church, the deacons in our church, are servants. In a lot of churches, the deacons function differently. Bye bye. In a lot of specifically Baptist churches, the deacons function as the governing board. In fact, I was a deacon one time at a church before I became a pastor. I got the opportunity to be a deacon, and my responsibility was essentially a pastoral role.



I was responsible. We had to fire a guy, and that landed on the deacons. The deacons were a governing board, not servants, but when we look at Acts 6, they're servants leading others with humility and Christ like character, with a passionate desire to serve the church as Christ has served us. Here's three things we see about the servant leader.

The servant leader is qualified to serve the church. The apostles say, we will need to find men of good repute, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom. And you are going to appoint them to do this work. In 1 Timothy 3, right after the qualifications of the pastor elder, we see the qualifications of the deacon.

Deacons, likewise, must be dignified, not double tongued, not addicted to too much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first. Amen. Then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives, likewise, must be dignified, not slanderers, not sober minded.

Faithful in all things, let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children in their own house that holds well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. At Grace Life, we call our deacons.

Servant leaders. So when I say a servant leader, we are thinking in the office of deacon. This is the language that we have. If you want to hear more about how we got that, members come to the members meeting on November 17th or you can listen to the after the church podcast later this week or after the sermon podcast later this week when Pastor Ben and I walk through this a little bit more.

But our servant leaders here at Grace Life, their character matters more than competency. They can be the greatest leader on earth, again, and yet have no relationship with the Lord. So a servant leader at Grace Life is qualified to serve the church. And the servant leader leads others. Now, if it takes seven men to serve the tables of widows in Acts chapter 6, what we're seeing from the story, that there's a lot of widows that need to be cared for, a lot of responsibility.

And they're also dealing with the complaints. So these seven men aren't just doers, they're leaders. They're taking on this responsibility. There's logistics involved, there's prayer involved, there's care involved. And we see even throughout the rest of scripture, when we see someone who's referred to as a deacon, there's a leadership component to it.



At Grace Life, our servant leaders serve in a capacity that help our different ministries. Let's run through the list of our servant leaders here at Grace Life. We have Tim Tyler, who is our connections leader. He handles the blue table. If there's the signups, all the members information, he will handle that.

He'll email first time guests. He is the first person at the door. He's been at that door at the Shriners Club and at Lake Hasbury Elementary School. And does a great job leading and helping people connect to our church. His wife, Angie, serves as our hospitality director. You have coffee on Sunday mornings, because Angie makes sure there's coffee on Sunday mornings.

Praise the Lord for that, right? A gift to the church. Angie also does a lot of things behind the scenes that just makes this place hospitable. Darren Damron, who did the announcements earlier, leads our life groups, puts the questions together in the program that you see, helps set our life groups up to thrive.

He's leading this ministry. Chaz and Kayla Demps lead our student ministry, making sure our teenagers are being discipled in God's word and having a great time on Sunday nights at 5pm. Parents, make sure your teenagers are involved. Chris Holstein leads our KidLife Elementary. He put the processes in place to help you disciple your kids at home.

During the service, while we were singing earlier, he made we ran out of paper at the printer. I don't know how to do that. Chris does. He made it happen. I'm assuming Chris made it happen. I told him and it happened. Alright?

Kendra Butler leads our Nursery and Preschool in KidLife. And those babies love it back there. Can you not hear them right now? They're having a blast. This is why the parents are like, you can preach an extra hour, that's fine with me. They're having fun. A safe environment. But they're not just being babysat back there.

They're being talked to about Jesus. The babies don't understand what's going on. But they know these ladies back there love them. And as they get older, they build relationships with these people that care for them. Her husband Howie leads our worship. And does a great job. I thank the Lord for Howie.

Because we would not be singing if it was just me. How he chooses the songs on Sunday, reads the scripture ahead of time to put together songs that fit with our sermon text for that day.

And he leads us well when we sing.



I'm going through the list to make sure I covered everybody, alright? Those are our servant leaders who lead us well. And without them, Pastor Ben and I would not be able to focus on the pastoral work. The amount of work that they do for the good of our church frees us to do the work we're called to do.

Imagine right now if I had to watch nursery. What would happen? The babies would be in here, alright? And then nobody's paying attention because there's cute babies crawling everywhere and doing baby things. And so I'm preaching the word, but babies aren't taken care of. What about singing? And, oh, hospitality.

What if I had to hold the door open? Think, just think about the significance of the Office of Servant Leader Deacon at Grace Life Church. And I'm thankful for them and what they do. But it also means we work together. There's not a, hey, be free and lead. We, as pastor and elders, we help guide those different ministries.

So two examples. One, this earlier, a couple months ago, we unveiled the new kid life curriculum for our parents. Chris worked with us, but ultimately, Pastor Ben and I did the vetting of that material and said, this is good, solid, biblical material. We recommend it. We would love for you to put it to use.

Chris took it and ran with it. We did the same thing for student ministry. It's the preaching and teaching of God's Word. We want to make sure it's good, right? Darren, in the life group, he comes up with these questions, and part of our process to stay committed to God's Word is he just, he does a great job.

We've never had an issue, but he sends it to us, we put our stamp of approval on it, and we go from there. This is a checks and balances where, hey, the deacons, the servant leaders are working alongside the pastor elders for the good of the church. It glorifies God when we serve others. What a beautiful thing, that we get to serve alongside of one another.

But God has not just called pastor elders to do the work of the ministry, and just servant leaders. God has called the entire church to do the work of the ministry. Meaning, there is a place for you to serve at Grace Life Church. And no spot is more significant than the other. Your gifting may be writing cards.

That is awesome. Use it for the glory of God. You might be able to play an instrument. Use it for the glory of God. Use your gift to serve the church, the good of the church, for the glory of God. Because as we've seen, God uses ordinary people full of grace and power to grow His church and reach the community.



Look what happens at the end of Acts chapter, in Acts chapter 6 verse 7. They come to this conclusion. We've got servant leader deacons. We've got pastor elders. Everybody is serving. Here's the verse in verse 7. And the word of God continued to increase and increase. And the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith, meaning it takes the entire church to serve one another.

God uses men and women like you, like me, to accomplish his growing work in a community. In Acts chapter seven, we're introduced to seven men, only two of 'em. Their names are mentioned, at least twice. Steven and Philip, the other five. This is the only time we ever hear their name ever. And think about the eternal significance they had in the life of the church.

One day we're going to get to meet Mr. Timone. And maybe Pumba, right? But Timone served the church in this capacity and established an office, an ordinary man full of grace and power. Stephen and Philip would go on to be used in different ways. Here's what I find wonderful about God's sovereignty, and we'll close here.

When we continue to read Acts chapter 6 and chapter 7, Stephen finds himself in some controversy. He is standing up proclaiming the gospel. The good news is that Jesus died for sinners. He did it confidently in the power of the Holy Spirit. And when he finished that sermon, they stoned him and killed him for proclaiming Jesus.

Now here's what we know about the life of Stephen. God used him as a catalyst to take the gospel out of Jerusalem into the world. In Acts chapter 11, we'll look at it in a few weeks. It says, Now those who were scattered Because of the persecution that arose over who? Stephen. Traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews.

Here's what Acts 11, 19 says. That God used a table waiter to take the gospel to the nations. He is a servant just willing to be used for the Lord. He could have said the Apostles, but no, Stephen was a catalyst because he said, I will serve the Lord, I will go, I will do what's necessary for the church, Lord, use me for your glory.

An ordinary man just wanting to be used by the Lord would eventually help turn the world upside down for the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's our prayer that we should each have, Lord use me to grow your church. Use me in a small way, use me in a big way, use me in whatever way you want me to. Way to use me, Lord, for your glory and the good of the church.





I need a volunteer. Tegan, come on up. He raised his hand fast. Come on up, Tegan. Give Tegan a hand.

Alright, now, this is the illustration here. Tegan's done everything I needed him to do. He didn't know what needed to be done. I just said, I need a volunteer, and Tegan went, I'll do it. This is the posture we're to take as Christians. When the Lord says, hey, I need a volunteer. Alright, Lord, use me in any way.

Tegan, did you know what I was going to have you do? That's a little risky, right? And he's I'll do this. Willing to be used in any other way, and here's what happens. We lose this heart posture that Tegan has. When the Lord says, I need a volunteer, we say, someone else can do it.

Someone else can do it, someone else could be willing to take my place, but this is not what God calls us to do. God didn't say, the apostles didn't say, hey, I need a volunteer. Or they just didn't, excuse me, they didn't just go and pick people. They said, we need volunteers, and we need seven of them, let's find them.

And these seven men were willing to be used by the Lord. This is the posture that we're to have. Thanksgiving. You can go have a seat that we're to have as Christians, Lord, use me. You need a volunteer. I'll go to the nations with the gospel. I'll wait tables. I'll preach your word. I'll start churches.

I'll help dying churches. I'll serve in nursery. I'll serve at the front door. I will sink for the glory of your name. You need a volunteer. I'm ready. This is the posture that we're to have open hands and an open heart that says, Lord, use me for your glory. So find a place to serve, find a place here at grace life to serve one another.

If you need help finding that place, that's why Pastor Ben and I are here. Pray for your leaders. Pray for those names that I mentioned as they lead their different ministries. And pray for your pastor elders, that we will glorify God and live our lives according to His glory. Third, if you see a need, be a catalyst.

Don't complain. Someone else can do it. We got this problem. If you see a need, attack it. For the glory of the Lord, for the good of one another. Father, thank you.



