

**Acts 6: “1 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. 2 Then 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. 3 Therefore, 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; 4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer & to the ministry of the word." 5 And 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, 6 whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.”**

# **"The Importance of Deacons"**

**As you can see from my sermon title, I have chosen to speak about Deacons this month and it is appropriate because our members will be asked to vote on having Igor Avanto be the next deacon here at Church of the King next week! With that in mind, I want to address three things: What is a deacon, the importance of the work of Deacons, and finally the qualifications of a deacon, with some implications for all of us! The first point is pretty simple:**

**The term *deacon* comes from the Greek word *diákonos* meaning "servant" or "minister." We find that word used almost thirty times in the New Testament, and it designates an appointed member of the local church who assists by serving other members & meeting material needs.**

**It is one of the two offices clearly given in the New Testament, and why we are considered a two office church, though some see others. The appointment of the first deacons is found in our text from Acts 6 and leads us quite naturally into the importance of their work:**

- **The Church in Jerusalem was growing, working together and solving problems, being a great witness to Jerusalem as they were commanded!**

**Then in chapter six we come to a problem that developed in the Church at Jerusalem.**

- **Yes, a problem in the Church!**

**Imagine that, here we have the Spirit filled Church, performing miracles, witnessing in Jerusalem, growing like crazy and being of one accord, meeting the needs of the Saints...**

- **And Luke presents a problem...**

**It reminds me of the wise council often given to those who struggle to find a church home: “If you find a perfect Church don’t join it because it will no longer be perfect ☺**

- **So why does the Church have problems? It is full of sinners!**

**Jesus has come to save His people from their sins...**

- **Mission accomplished on the cross and confirmed in the power of His resurrection!**

**The Holy Spirit has come in power as the comforter for the Church with a plan to fill the earth with the Kingdom of Jesus...**

- **And yes, He does so with forgiven SINNERS!**

**So Luke honestly presents a problem that has arisen in the early church.**

**The Bible is not a fairy book tale about having new life in Jesus...**

- The Bible is an honest account of the ravages that sin has brought into God's creation and His story of redemption and restoration.

So what was the problem in the early church: It was not something that would surprise us even today. Some people were playing favorites and others were taking offense.

We are not given enough detail to know how the blame should be apportioned, but Luke is clear that it is a REAL problem. A problem not unlike many we face today when different groups come together:

- The rich & the poor
- Different racial groups
- Young and old
- Even men and women

The Apostles see this problem as a real problem and move to present a solid solution.

- And the important lesson to remember is that it is much better to find a solution and move forward than to simply focus on who is to blame!

The Apostles also find a solution that avoids creating bigger problems. It might well have been easier to just jump in and fix the problem themselves...

But that would divert them from the work they were called to do.

- AND it would also have meant that these faithful men chosen to be deacons would have been denied their opportunity to serve in the Church!

Parents and employers should understand this principle...

You must let employees or children learn, and even fail a bit, so they can become competent in doing the tasks they are called to do. When a mother trains a child to wash the dishes or do the laundry, that process takes MORE time than if she just did it herself.

- But if you continue to do everything yourself in a growing family, or business, then you will be far too busy and not do any of your tasks well.

Over time all of the children will learn to do these tasks and you will have more time for other important duties that you have as a parent!

The same is true for employers and it is certainly true here at church.

So the Apostles tell them to select out seven men to serve the Church.

Obviously this does not mean that every church should have seven deacons, but rather that we need to have enough men serving to meet all of the needs of a particular church.

- The process that the Apostles lay out is the reason we select church leaders in a similar way today.

Those who are qualified and show themselves willing to serve are brought before the congregation for their approval...

- Then they are commissioned and blessed for the work by the laying on of hands, as we will do with Igor if he receives your approval next week.
- This is a very important responsibility and it should not be taken lightly.
- Remember, it is our faithful service day by day in whatever role God has cast us that moves the Kingdom of God forward!

**Before I move on to qualifications, I should also point out that the Deacons are not expected to do all the work in the Church and having an office of deacon does not mean we do not appreciate the work that does get done by all of the members & friends of Church of the King.**

**It would take too long to acknowledge everyone, but we should occasionally give thanks for this work and appreciate it.**

**Like Mr. Pekarek who takes care of our sound system and has posted over a thousand sermons on Sermon Audio! I would not want to estimate the number of square miles of carpet that Tony has vacuumed and Abby by my estimate has washed close to eight thousand wine glasses in recent years. And of course, moving from a sanctuary set-up to the lunch format does not happen by magic, so we should appreciate all those strong arms & legs each week, and of course help if they are short-handed.**

**Now I know the men are excited about serving the women at today's lunch and the children will serve moms on Mother's Day, but lest we forget those women feed us & clean up the other 50 Sundays a year.**

- **The point is that there is a LOT of work involved and that is why we have the office of Deacon!**

**So finally, we come to the qualifications the Apostles told the Saints to look for in these men:**

**They said to look for men who were:**

- **Of good reputation**
- **Full of the Holy Spirit**
- **Full of wisdom**

**Remembering that these same qualities are important for all of our lives if we would serve King Jesus faithfully.**

**First they were to have a good reputation... This is certainly not our modern concept of being famous like Tom Brady or Joe Rogan.**

- **Having a good reputation means living a life that conforms with the commandments of God**

**This can be quite a challenge in our modern age where we are constantly told to “do our own thing” or to “be yourself” caring little about what others think.**

- **We ARE to care about what others think, AND we are to do so humbly and through service.**

**Our reputation should not be based on bad things we have done or how popular we can make ourselves in the eyes of others.**

- **A good reputation that is pleasing to the Lord is one born out of humble service to others!**
- **We should long to hear the those precious words, ‘well done, good & faithful servant!’**

**The next qualification the Apostles ask for might also give us pause:**

- **They were to be filled with the Holy Spirit?**

**Did not the Spirit fall on everyone at Pentecost? Yes, Luke does say the Saints were filled with the Spirit at Pentecost and this is when the promised Comforter was given to the Church and He will not forsake us.**

Here we see the danger of proof texting... In the same Book of Acts, Luke says Peter was filled with the Spirit as he spoke before the council and that the Saints were filled with the Spirit as they prayed. Later, Paul is filled with the Holy Spirit at his baptism but is also seen being filled with the Spirit later in his ministry.

This “filling” has to do with who or what is controlling our lives...

Again in Acts, Luke tells us that Satan had filled the heart of Ananias. Luke tells of the religious leaders who were filled with indignation and later in Acts we find the Jews filled with envy and the Gentiles at Ephesus filled with confusion.

- The Apostles were looking for men who were living lives that were influenced by the power of the Holy Spirit, and this applies to us as well:

Listen to the admonition the Apostle Paul gave the Ephesians: “15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,

16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

- If you allow your life to be filled with the things and thoughts of the world, the flesh and the devil it will bring forth the same dissipation we see in a drunkard.

*[you should have children observe drunks!]*

If we redeem the time we will be wise and ready to confront the evils of our day...

- If we do not, then we are part of the problem and not part of the solution which grieves the Spirit greatly!

The bottom line is that everywhere in the Bible we see the focus of faithful service in the Kingdom is grounded in the knowledge of God and followed by faithful actions which result from following His commands.

- IF you love me keep my commandments Jesus told His disciples!

You can't love someone you do not know and you cannot love someone who has authority over you if you do not obey them! So what does it mean to be wise?

- It means to know God's will and to do God's will!

**The Christian life is that simple!**

We often make things much more complicated than it needs to be:

If a child is having trouble at home, the Bible says, “honor your mother and your father”

In the flesh we want to say, ‘but you don't know my parents’ or ‘how can that help my situation.’

- Being Spirit filled & wise means believing God when He says this is the first commandment with promise and doing what it says!
- A couple struggling in their relationship should follow the priorities given in the Scripture that a husband is to love his wife and that the wife is to submit to her husband

Again our flesh says, ‘you don't know my husband or my wife’:

‘I tried loving her and she still did not do what I wanted,’ or ‘How can I submit to a man who is so stupid.’

- If you are Christians who want to be wise, filled with the Spirit and have a good reputation, then you need to get serious about these commands because your primary witness for Jesus to the world  
IS your marriage!

We could go on to talk about how we educate our children, how we run our businesses or our relationship with our employer, how we relate and involve ourselves with the civil magistrates...

- And it is going to come down to the same principles: Love God and love your neighbor!

We can go back to the Book of Deuteronomy where Moses instructs the people as they enter the land, we can go to the Book of Proverbs where Solomon instructs his son, we can study the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels or turn to the Epistles given to instruct the Church and the message is the same: Know who God is and follow His commands!

- Do these simple things and you will be greatly blessed as you rightly serve the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
- Fail to do these things and you will bring the curses of the covenant down upon your head!

Moses said to the people,

- “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil...”
- Seems like such an easy choice, but in our flesh we resist this wisdom with all our might.

Here at Church of the King I trust that our desire is to be wise, Spirit filled Saints with good reputations!

And of course it is incumbent upon us as your leaders to set a good example in all of these areas. Deacon Walker and your elders have done our due diligence to evaluate Igor and his family and thus we are bringing him before the Congregation next week for your approval.

Please keep this entire process in your prayers and Lord willing if we do ordain and install Igor as our next deacon we all can benefit from and enjoy his service to us for many years to come!

#### **Communion Meditation: Acts 2:40**

“And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.