

### TAKEAWAY:

God grows His church through ordered leadership and devotion to the Word.

### INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS:

- Take a few minutes and ask your life group the following: "What's your role in the church, and how does it contribute to the gospel mission?"

### UNDERSTANDING:

Have a group member read of Acts 6:1-7

- How did this sermon help you better understand this passage of scripture? Is there anything that was mentioned during the sermon that stuck out to you?
- How did the apostles handle the complaint in verses 1-2? What principles can we learn from their response?
- Why was it important for the apostles to prioritize prayer and the ministry of the Word? How do you witness this model of prayer and the ministry of the Word played out in our church today?
- What happens when a church neglects either preaching or practical service?

### APPLICATION:

- What practical steps can our life group take to ensure that the ministry of the Word remains prioritized while also addressing legitimate needs through humble service? (i.e. Serve on Sunday mornings and Wednesday Nights: Kids/Students, Serve with Village 127, etc.)
- How can we support our church leaders in protecting their time for prayer and studying God's Word?

### GO DEEPER:

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material.

You can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting and to deepen your study of our text from this week. Here are two "Going Deeper" discussion prompts that build upon the above provided questions without repeating them:

**A Biblical Paradigm, a Division of Labor:** The nascent church established a division of labor by appointing qualified leaders to handle practical administrative needs, thereby ensuring the apostles were not distracted from their primary calling. So too today, a congregation and the staff they hire must actively protect their pastors' time from being consumed by the "serving of tables" or other undeniably good but secondary

operational tasks. By taking ownership of practical ministries they provide their pastors/elders with the indispensable space needed to devote themselves to prayer and the studying/preaching of God's Word.

- Are there practical, administrative, or operational tasks within our church that I am uniquely gifted to take on so that our pastors are freed to focus on prayer and the Word?
- How can I actively pray for my pastors, recognizing that their ministry's power and success are entirely dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit?
- In what ways might our congregation unintentionally pressure our pastors to act more like corporate administrators and program directors rather than spiritual shepherds?
- What specific steps can our small group or ministry team take to proactively meet the physical and emotional needs of the vulnerable in our church before the pastors even need to step in?
- How does my understanding of the phrase "serving tables" need to change to view it as a deeply spiritual, Spirit-filled calling rather than just a menial chore?
- When conflicts or complaints arise in our church body, how can I be part of a healthy, structured solution rather than adding to the pastoral burden?
- How can we foster a church culture that genuinely respects and guards the pastoral staff's need for hidden, uninterrupted time for intense study and intercessory prayer?
- Are my expectations of the pastor's availability and involvement in every church activity aligning more with modern cultural demands or with the biblical model established in Acts 6?

**The Anatomy of Congregational Conflict:** The dispute between the Hellenists and the Hebrews was not a minor logistical hiccup; it was an ethnic fault line that threatened to destroy the credibility of the Gospel of peace. John Wesley, in his historical analysis of this passage, identified this murmuring as an early manifestation of the "mystery of iniquity" creeping into the church, characterizing it as a grave sin of partiality and a breach of brotherly love.

- Why do periods of rapid congregational growth and divine blessing often bring hidden systemic inequalities to the surface?
- How did the early church's willingness to listen to the "complaint" (rather than silence or ignore it) save the community from a catastrophic split?
- What are the modern cultural, socio-economic, or demographic dividing lines that threaten unity in our congregation today?
- How does murmuring act as a spiritual poison, and how does transparent, delegated leadership act as the ultimate antidote?
- How can we as a congregation actively seek out the "overlooked" demographics within our own church body before they feel compelled to complain?

#### **Quotes:**

- "We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word" means that prayer is one half of our ministry and it gives to the other half all its power and success." Charles Bridges
- "It is remarkable that of all the things they obviously had to do, they would separate out prayer and put it as an equal partner with all the rest of the ministry of the Word. It seems obvious, then, that anyone who is ordained to the ministry of the Word needs to go well beyond the average or 'normal' Christian prayer life." Tim Keller

#### **Group Accountability:**

- Find 1-2 ways you can support Apex Baptist Church in way of serving. Follow up with one another this week to see what progress is made.

#### **Group Prayer:**

- Pray for the leadership of our church; Staff, Pastors, Deacons, and those that serve in a leadership role.