

**July 21**

**Scriptures:** Read Acts 6 & 7

**Key Verse:** “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables... but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word!” (Acts 6:2b, 4)

## **Overview**

It never seems to fail. Get a bunch of people organized into some sort of group and, before you know it, you’ve got dispute and division. The early church was just a few months (perhaps even weeks) old when the Greek-speaking Jewish believers (Hellenists) became upset because they thought they were being discriminated against. They complained that the Hebrew-speaking windows were getting all the attention in the daily administration of social assistance. “It’s not fair,” I can hear them cry. “We want justice!” Maybe they even threatened to start a new church, “for Greek speakers only”. Whatever the case may have been, the apostles had to resolve the issue. Therefore they’d had no mechanism for such a resolution, so they made a decision.

They decided to choose seven men to take the administrative responsibilities of the newly developing church. The apostles did so in order that their prayer and preaching focus might not be eroded. They would pray and preach while the administrators served. In this was the dispute would be settled and the potential for future division would be diminished.

Miracles, wonders, preaching, and teaching had to be supported with a dynamic administrative infrastructure. Dynamic, not only in terms of flexibility and adaptability, but also in terms of the administrators themselves.

Stephen is a case in point. Luke tells us he was “a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit” (6:5a). He was a powerful preacher as well as an able administrator (a rare combination!) and, as we see in chapter 7, he became the church’s first martyr.

If you’re nominated to your church’s board of deacons, don’t see it as a mirror role. You’ll be a peacemaker, an administrator, perhaps even a preacher. Hopefully never a martyr!

## **Prayer**

Thank you Father for Your call on our lives to be servants. Help us to be peacemakers, people of good report and full of the Holy Spirit and faith in our home, our church, and our community. Amen!