

Building a Strong Community Within the Church 2

Acts 6:1-7 (NIV)

“In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, ‘It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.’ ⁵ This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶ They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. ⁷ So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.”

I.

Strong church communities grow in numbers when there is a spiritually healthy environment for people to come to.

Consider: Acts 2:42-47

Strong church communities grow in numbers through evangelism and discipleship.

Acts 6:1a (NIV) says, *“In those days when **the number of disciples was increasing,**”*

Strong church communities grow in numbers when people feel connected to their church and to one another.

Acts 4:32a (MSG) says, *“The whole congregation of believers was united as one—one heart, one mind!”*

II.

Strong church communities are built when leaders address problems instead of avoiding them.

Acts 6:1b (NIV) says, *“the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.”*

Strong church communities are built when leaders have their priorities in order.

Acts 6:2 (NIV) says, *“So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, ‘It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.’”*

Strong church communities are built when leaders are clear about who we are looking for to help us solve problems.

Acts 6:3 (MSG) says, “*So, friends, choose seven men from among you **whom everyone trusts**, men **full of the Holy Spirit and good sense**, and we’ll assign them this task.*”

III.

Leaders in strong church communities create buy-in by involving others in problem solving.

Acts 6:5a (NIV) says, “*This proposal pleased the whole group.*”

We build strong church communities when the people have confidence in those selected to lead them.

Acts 6:5b (NIV) says, “*They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.*”

When strong church communities have the right people in the right places, it accelerates our effectiveness.

Acts 6:7 (NIV) says, “*So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith*”