

Acts of the Holy Spirit - 7
Church will be Messy – Week of Oct 30, 2016
Bay Park Life Groups – Participant

Acts is the story of a church that doesn't want to move, that is culturally monotone. The Holy Spirit comes and moves this entrenched church out! It's the story of Babel in reverse. John Mahaffey

In Acts 6 we see the church facing some serious growing pains. This chapter is a beautiful reminder that God never intended his church to be mess free, rather God uses the messiness to do some of his greatest redemption work within and without.

1. If you could choose to relive or redo one event this past week, what would it be?

Read Acts 6:1-7

2. In verse 1 we note that for the first time Luke calls Christians “disciples”, a trend that will continue throughout Acts (e.g., 6:2, 7, 9:1, 19, 26, 11:26, 29, 13:52, 14:20 etc). Why is this important and what does it teach us?
3. The word “complained” (v. 1 NIV, NLT, ESV) can also be translated to *murmur or grumble*. The Greek word means “to speak privately in a low voice”.¹ What is it about murmuring and grumbling that is so destructive and what does Acts 6 teach us about how best to handle it?
4. Acts 6 records the Church’s first encounter with ethnically based discrimination. Hebraic Jews were from Palestine. They spoke Aramaic, the ancestral language of the Jews. Hellenistic Jews had embraced the predominant Greek culture, thought, customs and language. The issue wasn’t simply communication, there was a racial divide. Though both Christians, Hebraic and Hellenistic Jews looked at life and faith through different lenses. Intentional or not, the attitude of the Hebraic “purebred” Jews caused them to be blind to the Grecian Jews in their midst. How do you see this same story being played out in the church today?
5. Looking at verses 2-4 we note that church growth resulted in church tensions that in turned called for church structure. What is noteworthy about the way they chose to respond to the growing conflict?
6. Why does Luke bother listing the names of those chosen (v. 5)? What’s so significant about the names listed and what does this say about the work of the Gospel in the church?

¹ R. J. Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Act* (Marshall, TX 20003) p 91

7. Luke is clear, the fact that they dealt with the discrimination from a Gospel perspective resulted in continued health and growth. How can we ensure that the messiness of being a church doesn't impede our missional call and effectiveness?

8. Verse 7 says "and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith". Both the conversion of priests, and the description of "became obedient to the faith" is a first. Why might priests suddenly be converting to Christianity and what is so significant about the phrase "obedient to the faith"?