

**Sunday 11 September 2022**

**Team Work makes the Dream Work**

**Acts 6:1-7.**



The book of Acts shows us what it means to be fully devoted to Christ and filled by the Holy Spirit. Luke, a physician who travelled with Paul was the writer of Acts. And if you read about the first church you will notice as they were serving God, they were performing miracles, sharing, being generous, meeting in fellowship and converting thousands. Wow, sounds like a perfect church doesn't it. **Do you wish our church was like that?**

Unfortunately there is no such thing as a perfect church. As we heard in our Scripture this morning, even with the apostles around there were still congregational problems and conflicts. Why? Because human nature takes charge and problems arise.

Let's take a look at what was happening?

At that time Jewish people lived in Jerusalem and Judah, but also in other parts of the world. When it came time to retire, many Greek-speaking Jewish couples would migrate to Jerusalem so they could be buried there. Often the husband would die first leaving many widows in Jerusalem. All who were part of the church were Christians believers, but language was a barrier leading to discord. The Hellenistic Jews spoke Greek embracing the Greek culture while Hebraic Jews spoke Aramaic or Hebrew embracing the Jewish culture.

It was claimed that the Greek widows were being neglected, not given the food they needed and being ignored – small problems became big

issues. Conflicts often spin out of control if not addressed in the first instance and they lead to sin and distress in the body of Christ.

Have you ever watched movies such as Die Hard and Lethal Weapon. Do you notice that often the bad guy is hit and he stays down but the good guy, the hero – he gets covered in dirt, mud and blood, he has been kicked, run over, shot, tortured, taken 30 kicks to his body, but somehow, at the end of the movie – he gets up, laughs and goes on his way. I wish life was as easy as it is in one of those movies but it is not, it does not reflect the reality of everyday life with all of our pressures.

Now what was happening in the first church was not so dramatic but still it created problems. **“How did the Apostles make it work and restore harmony?”**

### **BY TEAMWORK WHICH MAKES THE DREAM WORK.**

The Apostles solve the problem of the Greek-speaking widows need through teamwork based on gifting and calling. The leaders of the church were given certain talents and abilities by God who set them aside for the special task of shepherding the church.

The apostles identified what the issue was – a language and cultural barrier. However, they didn't rush in to take over the work of handing out food. Sometimes we do that – no-one stepping up, otherwise it won't get done.

The apostles didn't ignore the issue either – they took the time to pray and read the Word, acknowledging that the calling from God was to preach and teach not to become burdened with administrative tasks.

We don't typically think of prayer as hard work, but it is. To pray for the needs of our church body takes time and energy. It takes focus and dedication. God moves when we pray.

God has gifted and called each of us. In fact, that's why we need a team too, so we can focus on the ways God has gifted and called us. There have been times when I felt like we were blocked somehow from going forward to what God was calling us to. At first I tried to figure it out—try this or try that to get it right—and when I finally went through all the options and none of them worked, I prayed and God opened the way forward.

Maybe you've experienced that too, sometimes God says no or wait but at all times, prayer has power. Perhaps you've heard the catchphrase, "Couples that pray together stay together." How about, "Churches that pray together stay together."

The apostles enacted their plan They called their congregation together to choose seven people who could take care of the widows. Notice, they didn't tell the complainers – well if you don't like it, you can go elsewhere. They didn't set up a Royal Commission to investigate the issue. The Hebraic Jews didn't take their bat and ball and leave. They all worked together as a community of Christians. The majority of the men chosen were Greek and everyone accepted this was the best way to move forward and restore unity.

We all have gifts to enable us to serve God. You don't have to be on the Board to serve. God gives each of us a gift or gifts to serve the church body. As a church today we face challenges just like the first church. There are a lot of responsibilities and duties that go into running a

church. Who's in charge of the church, who is responsible for our Outreach programs, community groups who hire the hall, who counts the money, what do we do with the money, what do we do when someone needs something in our church, how about when we see needs in our community, what about discipleship and evangelism, aren't we all supposed to do that, who takes care of what. It can all become overwhelming and lead to burnout as we do too much or the wrong things. Some people are stepping up to fill gaps, but it still can be stressful.

### **Teamwork makes the dream work.**

The Bible uses the illustration of a body, with its many different types of parts, fitting together to make one person. That's like the church. God made us each unique and distinct with different gifts and abilities and He puts us in the same place, the church, to figure out how to work together.

God puts a whole congregation full of people with different gifts and abilities together every week to make something amazing. We worship Him and we create works of art as we make music, teach, evangelize, serve the needy, and love one another. Everyone matters.

### **Every member of the church body is gifted and called. Teamwork makes the dream work.**

There are five different places in the Scripture that talk about gifting, and each list is different (**Rom 12:6-8**; **1 Cor 12:8-10, 28-30**; **Eph 4:11**; **1 Pet 4:11**).

There are lots of ways God may have gifted you. Maybe He's gifted you with being really friendly, great! We'd love to have you call people in the church directory to check in on them and greet them when they return to church.

Maybe He's gifted you with making good meals. Great! You can make a meal for a parishioner at home.

Maybe He's gifted you with the ability to write encouragement cards to the entire church. Great! If you don't know where to begin, reach out. We can help you fit in the church body.

Our dream as a church is the vision God has given us to help fulfill the mission Jesus gave us—for the gospel to go out to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. What better way to accomplish that mission than through teamwork. When we work together, and we each function in our gifting and calling, God does something amazing. Look what happened in Acts the word of God spread to the rest of the world.

We are a piece of the divine puzzle – we are a part of God's plan and method and God wants us to use all of us to be part of His ministry to the world.