

II. Group discussion *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better.*

Read Acts 6:1-7 aloud.

1. What was the problem in this passage?

If a church led by apostles made a major goof (letting widows starve), what kind of expectations should we have for the church today?
As long as there are people leading the church, there will be mistakes. And sometimes we will make major mistakes.

When our leaders make decisions that prove to be wrong, what would be some godly ways to respond?
We could use tar & feathers, we could leave angry, or we could treat our leaders with the same mercy and love that God has shown us.

2. What are some things the apostles did right in this situation?

What could have been some other ways to address this situation of hungry widows?

What problems could have grown out of this crisis? If the apostles had not responded with wisdom, strength and love, how would it have crippled the life of the early church?

What are some ways that good leaders help the church act like a loving community?

3. Why did the apostles decide not to feed the widows themselves?

Why did the apostles let the community select people to address this problem? Why didn't Peter hand-pick some leaders?

What does it mean to discern your calling?

In what ways were the apostles discerning their calling through this encounter?

In what ways were the apostles leading others to discern their calling in this story?

4. When you look at the list of leaders selected to lead this ministry, how many traditional Jewish names (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Daniel, etc.) do you see?

Given the absence of Hebraic names, what do you think was the ethnicity of the leaders the church selected?
In Acts 1-7, everyone is Jewish. But it was Grecian Jews chosen to feed Grecian widows.

What can we learn about leadership from who was selected to address this problem?
Not only did the apostles delegate responsibility, they delegated it to the people who were closest to the problem. Quite possibly, they invited critics to become leaders.

What role do good leaders play in launching a community into action?

It is easier to discuss a problem than it is to address it. What are some keys to turning a good discussion into action?

How can good leaders motivate us to do God's work in the world?

5. Epilogue

How well did these new leaders do with their meals on wheels ministry, based on Acts 6 & 8? *Read 6:8-10 and 8:4-8. They used this positive leadership experience to launch other initiatives.*

When have you seen someone get an opportunity to lead and the person shines in amazing ways nobody had expected?

What is one way you are called to be a leader?

What is one way you might like to develop as a leader?

How could you start?

III. Other resources

The point – God gives the church leaders so that we might all grow to be like Christ (Eph. 4:11-13). Each of us can be a leader among our peers and in the church.

Prayer

Pray for the leaders of our congregation.

Ask God to raise up new leaders.

Seek wisdom on how each of us could develop as a leader for Christ.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Play follow the leader. You be the first leader, and be sure to do some things that are impossible for some of the kids (lift something, touch the ceiling, etc.)

What makes a good leader?

Why is it important for a leader to help group members do the things that they can do – no more and no less?

Read Acts 6:1-7 aloud.

What happened in this story?

Ask the kids to re-tell it in their own words.

What can we learn about being good leaders from this story?

What are some ways that kids are leaders? How are you a leader among your friends?

The Church has Left the Building

Acts 6 – Leaders with a Mission

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme for this meeting: **Leading in a way that honors God’s mission.**

The Bible class discussion talked about some key roles that leaders play in helping the church fulfill God’s mission in the world:

- Forming loving community – drawing people together in love.
- Helping the church discern God’s calling.
- Encouraging the church to carry out God’s calling – get it off the drawing board and into real-life situations.

This guide will lead the group to consider some ways the apostles did these things in Acts 6.

Leadership tip: One of the best tools for groups leaders is a covenant. This is a simple, one-page description of your purpose, goals, and procedures. It reads like a contract, but the ideal approach is to let a blank covenant raise issues to discuss (where to meet, what to eat, what about kids, etc.). Getting signatures is less important than getting open discussion that leads to consensus. About every six months or whenever your group hits a snag, pull out the covenant to remind people how you agreed to operate. Find a sample covenant at the website below.

I. Relate *Use a few of these to introduce the theme and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage individuals through these questions.*

- ❖ The worst thing about a belly button is...
- ❖ Who is a leader you admire?
- ❖ If you received bad news out of the blue, who are the first three people you would tell?

“The Church has Left the Building” is a series of Small Group guides written in support of the Missional Church curriculum by David Wray and Chris Benjamin. It is designed around the concept of adults discussing material in Bible class and then processing it in small group meetings during the same week. These guides, as well as the Missional Church curriculum, are based on the book, *Treasure in Clay Jars*, by Lois Barrett and others.

Training tools and study guides are at www.collegehills.org, then Ministries, then LIFE groups.