

Deacons, Pastors, and Congregations

The Significance of Acts 6

Acts 6.3

- Does it deny congregational authority, because the apostles authorized the choice?
- Or does it affirm congregational authority, because the apostles acknowledged congregational competence?

1. The grammar of the verb “look ye out” emphatically places the responsibility on the congregation to act.
2. We too often imagine a conflict, where none exists.
3. Ephesians 4.10-12
 - A. 4.10 talks about the Head, Jesus Christ
 - B. 4.11 talks about His “voice”
 - C. 4.12 talks about the flock

Observations about Acts 6

1. No office in the Church today correlates to that of the apostles. No pastor wields apostolic authority: his authority is the written Word of God.
2. Acts 6 is particularly significant, for it marks the example of resolving internal conflicts in the Church.

So Acts 6 provides us with 2 problems that need resolution

1. What should the Church do about neglected widows?
 - A. We have absolutely no information about the mechanism employed to equally distribute food to them
2. How should the Church address internal conflict?
 - A. “Problem solvers” from within the congregation are designated by the congregation and approved by the “voices.”

The principle that emerges, then is...

Within a framework of cooperation between shepherds and the congregation, problem solvers are appointed, and authorized to solve problems facing the congregation

Nowhere in the NT is that pattern contradicted or reversed

1. Church members are sent to the conference to talk about Gentiles: Acts 15.2-3; 4
2. Church members participated in the decision making process: Acts 15.22-23
3. They discipline members (I Cor. 5) and apparently majority vote rules (II Cor. 2.6)
4. They restore repentant members: II Cor. 2.7-8