

The Church: DEFINED

Study Questions

Week 11

Remember the good old days...back when life was simple? As time goes on, as we grow, and as things (or people) grow around us, complexity usually grows as well. A family of 5 is usually more complex than a newly married couple. A corporation is more complex than a lemonade stand! One of the threats of growth and increasing complexity is the phenomenon known as *mission creep*—an often slow but significant change away from an original objective or purpose. This week, we see how the rapid expansion of the church brought challenges as well. Would the mission change as things became more complex? Or, would the church adapt somehow without compromising its purpose?

MAIN TEXT: Acts 6:1-7

CONNECT & OBSERVE

1. What did you find most significant from Sunday's sermon?
2. Read the passage in Acts. What questions come to mind as you consider these verses?

LEARN

3. What is the issue at stake described in verse 1?¹ How could something like this happen?
4. What is the commitment expressed by the twelve disciples in verse 2? Why was this so critical to them?
5. Verses 3-6 describe the solution of the twelve. How else could they have addressed the issue if they weren't so committed "to prayer and to the ministry of the word"?
6. Verse 7 implies that the disciples handled the situation in a way that honored God. Why do you think Luke includes the comment that "a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith"? Why is this so significant?

¹ According to Darrell Bock, *Hellenists* "likely refers to Jews whose primary language was Greek, as distinct from those using a Semitic tongue" such as Hebrew or Aramaic. Importantly, the Hellenists were perceived as outsiders rather than natives to Israel.

APPLY

7. Any church becomes more complex as it grows, including a church that is adding service times or transitioning from two to three campuses! Thinking about this passage, in what areas or ways should we be willing to adapt? Conversely, are there areas where we should not adapt?
8. Who are the “Hellenist widows” at Calvary? In other words, who are the people who—as “outsiders” to us—might be easy for us to overlook or neglect?
9. The commitment to prayer and to preaching the Word of God can be challenged by any number of things. What are one or two things in our day and in our church that might threaten or distract us from our commitment to these things?
10. Take a few minutes to pray for Calvary—that we would remain focused on prayer and the preaching of the Word of God even as we seek to grow in our concern and care for those who might be “outsiders” to us.