



## Study Guide: Acts – Chapter 6

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Acts Chapter 6 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

### **Introduction**

Acts Chapter 6 marks a pivotal moment in the early church's development as it addresses practical challenges arising from rapid growth. This chapter introduces the appointment of seven men to serve the community, ensuring equitable care for all members. It also sets the stage for the first recorded conflict and the rise of Stephen, a key figure whose story will unfold in subsequent chapters. Readers should watch for how the early church balances spiritual leadership with practical service, highlighting the importance of delegation and unity in ministry.

### **Context**

Immediately following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the growth of the Jerusalem church, Acts 6 addresses internal community issues. The early believers, primarily Jewish Christians, are navigating the challenges of integrating diverse cultural backgrounds within the church, particularly between Hebrew-speaking Jews and Greek-speaking Jewish converts. The apostles, led by Peter, remain central figures, but the chapter introduces new leaders to manage practical needs. This moment occurs within the broader covenant framework of God's promises to Israel, now expanding through the Spirit to include Gentiles and diverse groups, emphasizing the church's mission to embody justice and unity.

### **Outline**

The chapter begins with the identification of a problem: the neglect of Greek-speaking widows in daily food distribution. The apostles respond by proposing a solution to delegate this responsibility to appointed men, allowing the apostles to focus on prayer and the ministry of the word. Seven men are chosen and commissioned, including Stephen, noted for his wisdom and Spirit-filled character. The chapter concludes with Stephen performing signs and wonders, drawing opposition from certain synagogue members, which



foreshadows future conflict. This structure highlights the church's adaptive leadership and the emergence of new ministry roles.

### **Verse-by-Verse Study**

Verses 1–3: The chapter opens with a complaint about the neglect of Greek-speaking widows in the daily distribution of food. The apostles recognize the risk of neglecting their primary calling and propose selecting seven men to oversee this task, ensuring fairness and allowing the apostles to focus on prayer and preaching.

Verses 4–6: The apostles instruct the community to choose seven reputable men filled with the Spirit and wisdom. After prayer and laying on of hands, these men are appointed, marking an early example of church order and delegation.

Verses 7–8: The word of God spreads as the number of disciples increases, including many priests who come to faith. Stephen, one of the seven, is described as a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, performing great wonders and signs among the people.

Verses 9–10: Opposition arises from members of a synagogue who cannot counter Stephen's wisdom and the Spirit's work through him. This introduces the theme of conflict between the early church and certain Jewish authorities.

Verses 11–14: False accusations are brought against Stephen, alleging blasphemy against Moses and God. These charges echo Old Testament controversies and set the stage for Stephen's defense and martyrdom in the following chapters.

Verse 15: The chapter closes with Stephen's face described as radiant, reflecting divine approval even in the face of hostility, symbolizing the Spirit's presence and the church's calling to witness boldly.

### **Key Themes**

One key theme is the importance of practical service within the church body, demonstrating that spiritual leadership must be complemented by attention to communal needs. The chapter also highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering leaders beyond the apostles, emphasizing wisdom and character as qualifications for ministry. Another theme is the inevitability of opposition when the gospel advances, as seen in the conflict surrounding Stephen. Finally, the chapter underscores the unity and diversity within the early church, balancing cultural differences through shared responsibility.



## **Cross-References**

The selection of the seven deacons in Acts 6 parallels Jesus' teaching in Mark 10:42-45 about servant leadership, where greatness is found in serving others. Stephen's Spirit-filled wisdom recalls the Spirit's empowerment described in Isaiah 11:2, highlighting the Spirit's role in leadership. The accusations against Stephen echo Old Testament prophetic conflicts, such as Jeremiah 26, where prophets faced opposition for challenging established religious authorities. The apostles' focus on prayer and the ministry of the word connects with Jesus' commission in Luke 24:49 to be witnesses empowered by the Spirit. These cross-references deepen understanding of the chapter's themes of service, Spirit empowerment, and faithful witness amid opposition.

## **Application**

Modern disciples can learn from Acts 6 the necessity of balancing spiritual priorities with practical ministry. Delegating responsibilities within the church ensures that no group is neglected and that leaders can focus on their primary calling. The qualities sought in the seven—reputation, wisdom, and Spirit-filled character—serve as a model for selecting leaders today. The chapter also encourages believers to expect opposition when faithfully serving God and to rely on the Spirit's empowerment. Finally, it challenges the church to embrace diversity and unity by addressing cultural differences with intentional care and shared responsibility.

## **Summary**

Acts Chapter 6 reveals the early church's adaptive leadership in response to growth and internal challenges. By appointing seven Spirit-filled men to oversee practical needs, the apostles maintain their focus on prayer and the word, fostering both unity and effective ministry. The chapter introduces Stephen, whose Spirit-empowered witness and ensuing opposition foreshadow the church's expanding mission and the cost of faithful service. This passage underscores the vital balance between spiritual leadership and practical care, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and the church's call to serve with wisdom and courage amid diversity and conflict.