

Serving Tables and Preaching the Word (2)

Acts 6:2-7

- I. The fact that the apostles desisted from serving tables, so that they could have all their time to preach, may sound as if they were too proud to serve.
- II. But to really evaluate the, and the lesson from their action, we should look at the sixth chapter of Acts more deeply. First of all, what is implied is that the apostles – the twelve original disciples of Jesus – had spent much of their time in the early days servicing tables. It even seems that they had taken time to do this serving from time that they could have been preaching. That means that their serving tables had a high priority for them, and this was the original standard of the disciples of Jesus.
- III. Note that “servicing tables” may include more than that. Apparently, from chapter 4, it included distribution of goods to the poor of the congregation. The principle illustrated here is that the leaders must take the most humble position (servicing tables) and must have as a high priority the material well being of the congregation (distribution of goods).
- IV. This doesn’t mean that all they did was serving materially: it is obvious that they also were preaching the word. So there was, in the original church, a balance of serving and preaching.
- V. However, at a certain point the apostles deemed that they should spend all their time in prayer and ministry of the Word. This means that the only thing more important than service of material is service of the spirit, in prayer and ministry. Thus, if you are not preaching and praying, you should be serving.
- VI. It is important to note the condition of the apostles altering their mission. Verse 5 is crucial: “What they said please the whole multitude.” That is, the first point of approval came from the people. This is a general principle that can be expanded very much.
- VII. Then came God’s approval: verse 7, the great success in evangelization. Thus what we need is both human approval and God’s approval. (This theme can be expanded.) Many people may think they have God’s approval, but if they really have it then sooner or later human approval will come as well, as an affirmation.

- VIII. The further condition of the apostles' shifting their roles was that they raised up others to serve tables; i.e., to follow their tradition of service. Those others now came to be known as "deacons" (from the Greek diakonos which means "ministrant, one who serves"). The apostles could not have moved on without raising up their successors, their spiritual children so to speak.
- IX. The position of deacon, thus, is the original apostolic function. It is very important. Later in the development of the church, the role and qualifications of the deacons were explained in more detail (1 Timothy 3:8). (Expand about the role of the church member all to serve as deacons in spirit, and about the importance of the official deacons themselves.) A church office is not a position of privilege or power. Church officers are to be the ones who serve the church the most, who sacrifice the most for the church. Church offices are to be the models for the rest of the church.