

A close-up photograph of a hand, likely a palm, with a textured, golden-brown background. The word "SERVE" is written in large, bold, black, distressed capital letters across the middle of the hand. Below it, the words "ONE ANOTHER" are written in a smaller, similar font.

SERVE
ONE ANOTHER

Chosen to Serve

Acts 6:1-15

Resolving a Conflict 1-6

- Beginning of the church.. growing/unity
 - Satan's counterattack (persecution, lying)
 - Ch 6 inner conflict
- 6:1 Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.
 - Hellenist (Jews of Greek language/Greek culture)
 - Hebrews (Jews of Hebrew language/Hebrew culture)
 - Charge of discrimination in daily food distribution

Wise Leadership Response 6:2-4

- 6:2-4 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. ³ Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; ⁴ but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”
 - Involved the whole community (Luke 22:25-27)
 - Clarified their own role (Teaching the word/prayer)
 - Proposed way to handle issue (Seven men of character)

Pleased the Whole Group **6:5-7**

- 6:5-6 And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, ⁶ whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.
 - Full of the Spirit / Wisdom / Good reputation
 - All seven names of Greek ethnic origin
 - Serving (diakonia) – serve tables (2), ministry of word (4)
- 6:7 Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith. (continued growth)
 - Many priests obedient to the faith

Stephen's Impact 6:8-11

- 8-10 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. ¹⁰And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.
 - Full of faith and power – great wonders/signs
 - The power of his words – opponents exposed
- 11Then they secretly induced men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.”
 - Opponents seek revenge/false witnesses
 - Synagogue of the freedmen

Stephen's Arrest **6:12-14**

- 12-14 And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon *him*, seized him, and brought *him* to the council.
¹³ They also set up false witnesses who said, “This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law;
¹⁴ for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us.”
 - Charge of blasphemy Deut 13:1-11
 - Words against Moses and God John 2:19 Mark 14:58; 15:29
 - Association with Jesus/Subversion
 - Hostile Reaction of Jewish faithful

Stephen's Face 6:15

- 15 And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.
 - Reminiscent of face of Moses Exod 34:29-35
 - Divine Vindication of Stephen
- Growing escalation of opposition
 - Stephen becomes a catalyst to move gospel outward
 - His speech draws the line (7:51-54)
 - His death raises persecution (8:1-4)

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