

The Church on the Move: Next Level Church

Acts 6:1-7 || Pastor Paul Hahn || 24 July 2022

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: Did you have a favorite toy as a child? What made it so special?

Worship: [Psalm 9:7-14](#) (*Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God's invitation?*)

Sermon Summary for [Acts 6:1-7](#) (*Read aloud before reading the sermon summary.*)

From the days of the early church until now, the Gospel has come to us through God's church – to bless and grow and spread the life of Jesus into every corner of our lives and throughout the world. What does it look like for a church to not only grow and move forward in these ways, but to flourish? How do we as a congregation take things to the next level with Jesus?

A next-level church does complaint well // This story of the early church begins with a complaint. It's an important, genuine reminder that such conflict will (and sometimes should) happen for us. What's critical is learning to make and receive complaints thoughtfully. These aren't petty or personal issues being brought to the church leaders; this isn't a license to complain about trivial, secondary matters. These are concerns over the needs of real people; it's a call to repentance on core applications of our faith (in this case: caring for widows), emphasized throughout the Bible as expressions of living out the Gospel. The leaders receive these complaints beautifully – not with pride or defensiveness or with vague promises to fix things, but with a humble embrace of the concerns that lead to a swift, corrective response. Each side shows a dependence on grace, which leads to growth in the church.

A next-level church does diversity well // This is diversity as the world sees it. It's an understanding that all are welcome into God's family; He meets us through the Good News of Christ and changes and renews *all of us* with His mercy and love. Diversity is therefore true unity found in Jesus among all kinds of people. We all come to the Father with all kinds of sin and brokenness. But God has and will redeem it all; what's more, He is committed to healing and renewal. We are all one in Jesus as we submit (both personally and corporately) to Him as Lord, looking for His renewing grace to meet each one of us right where we are.

A next-level church does balance well // The balance of word and deed is desperately needed for the church to be vibrant. Preaching and teaching and theological training are essential to our faith. We should have a strong grasp of the Bible and our Savior's teachings. But it's also essential to offer concrete, tangible care for one another, to our communities, and throughout the world. We must seek to be our Lord's hands and feet, so that others may see the Holy Spirit alive in us, actively working to love, heal, and redeem His creation.

A next-level church gives ministry away well // The apostles had the wisdom to understand that fixing these problems by themselves wouldn't help the church grow. Instead, they delegated. Just as Jesus had shared His ministry with them, they entrusted an ever-widening circle of believers to serve and care for the church. Ministry needs to be shared if it is to flourish. God hasn't just called pastors to minister to the world. He has called all of us – all who seek to live a Gospel-centered lives – to actively participate in His redemptive mission for the world. There are no sidelines for us to sit on; we all have a part to play. And whether or not we feel able or prepared for such a calling, we can take comfort that it is all God's work (working in us and through us) that makes the church flourish. Our first step need only be our willingness and desire to depend on Jesus.

Discussion Questions (You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.)

A next-level church does complaint well

- This account of internal division tells of Hellenists who believed their widows were being treated unfairly by the Hebrews in the church. How do the apostles handle this potentially divisive situation?
 - What was at risk? What might have happened if the disciples didn't address this issue?
- What would you define as "core issues" of the church? What are some examples?
 - How do you discern between these and secondary matters, which you take personally and/or seriously? Do you have any examples of these?
- What does it look like to receive criticism well? How can we grow in this, both personally and together?

A next-level church does diversity well

- What is the significance of the priests "becoming obedient to the faith" as mentioned in Acts 6:7?
- The wisdom of the disciples is on full display in their selection of the early deacons. Who did they select?
 - What does this reveal about their desire for the Church?
- Where does the church differ from our culture on what diversity means and how it is valued?

A next-level church does balance well

- What does it look like when a church is flourishing? How does this differ from when a church is popular?
- What kind of balance are we called to? (as Pastor Paul spoke about)
 - What does it look like for you to realistically live out this balance?
 - How can your CG support and encourage each other to live out this kind of balance?

A next-level church gives ministry away well

- Where do you feel called to use your gifts to grow and build the Church?
- Does your CG delegate well? Are members given ways to actively participate in the group; are there avenues for everyone to serve and care for one another?
 - If not, what are some ways to grow into a group that does this well?
- How would your CG be different if it were to flourish more than it currently does?

Prayer

This week's Prayer Guide for personal or group use is [HERE](#).

Engage & Experience: Prayer

The **Pray for Me** Campaign creates a web of intergenerational relationships and equips adult believers to pass on their faith to the next generation. Will you join us in becoming a Prayer Champion for our young people at PCC?

For more information on becoming a prayer champion OR to have your child(ren) prayed for and to sign-up click [HERE](#). Consider signing up as a CG to pray for and invest in the children and families of PCC. Sign-up for the Pray for Me Campaign has been extended one more week.