

Guarding the Pulpit

Acts 6:1-7



Is the Problem
with Church

Hungry Widows?



*¹But as the believers rapidly multiplied,
there were rumblings of discontent.
The Greek-speaking believers complained
about the Hebrew-speaking believers,
saying that their widows were being
discriminated against in the
daily distribution of food.*

Acts 6:1 ^{NLT}

*³Jesus replied, “And why do you,
by your traditions, violate the direct
commandments of God? ⁴For instance,
God says, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and
‘Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of father
or mother must be put to death.’ ⁵But you say it
is all right for people to say to their parents,
‘Sorry, I can’t help you. For I have vowed
to give to God what I would have given to you.’*

Matthew 15:3-5 ^{NLT}

*⁶In this way,
you say they don't need to honor their parents.
And so you cancel the word of God for the sake
of your own tradition. ⁷You hypocrites! Isaiah was
right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote,
⁸'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts
are far from me. ⁹Their worship is a farce,
for they teach man-made ideas as
commands from God.'"*

Matthew 15:6-9 ^{NLT}

Is the Problem
with Church

Weary Pastors?



²So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers.

They said, “We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. ³And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility.

⁴Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word.”

Acts 6:2-4 ^{NLT}

¹⁴But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. ¹⁵You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

2 Timothy 3:14-17 ^{NLT}

³When I left for Macedonia, I urged you to stay there in Ephesus and stop those whose teaching is contrary to the truth. ⁴Don't let them waste their time in endless discussion of myths and spiritual pedigrees. These things only lead to meaningless speculations, which don't help people live a life of faith in God. ⁵The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith. ⁶But some people have missed this whole point. They have turned away from these things and spend their time in meaningless discussions.

1 Timothy 1:3-6 ^{NLT}

Is the Problem
with Church

Misplaced Love?



20 So Ahab summoned all the people of Israel and the prophets to Mount Carmel.
21 Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, “How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!” But the people were completely silent.

1 Kings 18:20, 21 ^{NLT}

*²²Then Elijah said to them,
“I am the only prophet of the LORD who is left,
but Baal has 450 prophets. ²³Now bring two bulls.
The prophets of Baal may choose whichever one
they wish and cut it into pieces and lay it on the
wood of their altar, but without setting fire to it.
I will prepare the other bull and lay it
on the wood on the altar,
but not set fire to it.*

1 Kings 18:22, 23 ^{NLT}

*24 Then call on the name of your god,
and I will call on the name of the LORD.
The god who answers by setting fire to the wood
is the true God!” And all the people agreed.*

*25 Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal,
“You go first, for there are many of you. Choose one
of the bulls, and prepare it and call on the name
of your god. But do not set fire to the wood.”*

1 Kings 18:24, 25 ^{NLT}

*²⁶So they prepared one of the bulls
and placed it on the altar. Then they called on
the name of Baal from morning until noontime,
shouting, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no
reply of any kind. Then they danced, hobbling
around the altar they had made. ²⁷About noontime
Elijah began mocking them.*

1 Kings 18:26-27a^{NLT}

*“You’ll have to shout louder,” he scoffed,
“for surely he is a god! Perhaps he is daydreaming,
or is relieving himself. Or maybe he is away on a trip,
or is asleep and needs to be wakened!”*

*²⁸So they shouted louder, and following their normal
custom, they cut themselves with knives and swords
until the blood gushed out. ²⁹They raved all afternoon
until the time of the evening sacrifice, but still there
was no sound, no reply, no response.*

1 Kings 18:27b-29^{NLT}

*³⁰Then Elijah called to the people,
“Come over here!” They all crowded around him as
he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been torn
down. ³¹He took twelve stones, one to represent each
of the tribes of Israel, ³²and he used the stones to
rebuild the altar in the name of the LORD.*

*Then he dug a trench around the altar
large enough to hold about
three gallons.*

1 Kings 18:30-32 ^{NLT}

*³³He piled wood on the altar,
cut the bull into pieces, and laid the pieces on the wood.
Then he said, “Fill four large jars with water, and pour
the water over the offering and the wood.” ³⁴After they
had done this, he said, “Do the same thing again!” And
when they were finished, he said, “Now do it a third
time!” So they did as he said, ³⁵and the water ran
around the altar and even filled the trench.*

1 Kings 18:33, 34 ^{NLT}

³⁶At the usual time for offering the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet walked up to the altar and prayed, “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all this at your command. ³⁷O LORD, answer me! Answer me so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God and that you have brought them back to yourself.”

1 Kings 18:36, 37^{NLT}

*³⁸Immediately the fire of the LORD
flashed down from heaven and burned up the young
bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust.*

It even licked up all the water in the trench!

*³⁹And when all the people saw it, they fell face down
on the ground and cried out,*

“The LORD—he is God! Yes, the LORD is God!”

1 Kings 18:38, 39 ^{NLT}

*⁴⁰Then Elijah commanded,
“Seize all the prophets of Baal.
Don’t let a single one escape!” So the people seized
them all, and Elijah took them down to the
Kishon Valley and killed them there.*

1 Kings 18:40 ^{NLT}

⁵Everyone liked this idea . . .

⁷So God's message continued to spread.

*The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem,
and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too.*

Acts 6:5a, 7^{NLT}