

SCRIPTURE

ACTS 6:1-7

Please sign and pass the black binder

Kids (ages 4-4th grade) are
dismissed for Children's Church
after Scripture Reading

STEPHEN
MINISTERS
COMMISSIONING
SUNDAY

2/7/2016



I. Train Lay Leaders so
the Pastors Can Devote
Themselves to First
Things

Acts 6:1-7- Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Core Value- Visionary Pastor- We expect our pastor(s) to lead, train, preach and teach the Word, cast the vision, and serve as an example of godliness before the congregation. We call them to a ministry of Word and prayer, equipping believers to do the work of ministry.

II. Train Lay Leaders so the Church Body May be Strong

Ephesians 4:11-16- And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Core Value- Congregational Ministry- We are committed to an “every member ministry,” since each has been uniquely gifted by God to be used of Him in a significant manner in our church. Those of all ages, backgrounds and experience will be trained and encouraged to find their place of service within the family of God.

III. Train Stephen Ministers So We May Bear One Another's Burdens

Gal. 6:2

Bear one another's burdens,
and so fulfill the law of
Christ.

Core Value- Heartfelt Compassion- We will be champions for the poor and outcast, and provide hope and comfort for the needy and hurting. Our desire is to minister to the needs of the whole person (spiritual, physical, emotional, and relational), as we learn what it means to “rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.” We will follow after the model of our Savior; “A bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish.”

Isa. 42:3

**How can we as a
congregation help?**

First, we can pray for our Stephen Leaders, Our Stephen Ministers, and their care receivers. This ministry calls for both time and effort. At times they may feel tired, discouraged, or convinced that they are not accomplishing anything. The assurance of our prayers and appreciation will help them keep moving forward.

Second, we can also affirm and show our appreciation for this valuable ministry. We can tell them how much their hard work means to us, tell others how much we value our Stephen Ministry.

Third, we can become involved in this ministry in many ways. Some of us may recognize a call to use our special gifts in this ministry and may apply to be a Stephen Leader or Stephen Minister. Others may accept the care of a Stephen Minister. We can be ministers of referral, watching for people in need and suggest a Stephen Minister's care. We all can give our enthusiastic support by keeping Stephen Ministry always before us and by praying for and affirming those who have answered God's Call to serve in his way.

LEADER: Now, we ask you, members of Grace, to open your hearts to the ministry of these people and to pray for them, that they may be effective servants of Christ. Are you prepared to meet this request? If so, answer, “Yes, with the help of God.”

CONGREGATION: Yes, with the help of God.

LEADER: We also ask you to accept their ministry when you need help, to allow these individuals to work with you as you face struggles in your life, that you might receive support and help from your Christian brothers and sisters. If you are prepared to meet this request, answer, “Yes, with the help of God.”

CONGREGATION: Yes, with the help of God.