

Title: **"And the Word of God Continued to Increase": How to Be a Healthy Church in Trying Times**  
Text: **Acts 6:1-7**

Find the sermon manuscript to follow along with online at [mercyhillchurch.org](http://mercyhillchurch.org).



## Big Idea

There's grumbling in the camp. This early church is threatening to fracture and divide from the start. The way they respond here makes all the difference. As we consider their response, we learn what a healthy church looks like, how a healthy church operates, even in—especially in—trying times.

### 1. The Problem

The church, this side of heaven, is a church at war, a church under fire, a church in conflict. If you come to church looking for a conflict-free, comfort-filled space, I'm sorry to say, but no such church exists. The Bible doesn't shy away from this fact. It's right here at the beginning. Conflict from without, conflict from within.

The bigger issue that should concern us, then, isn't so much that there is conflict outside and inside the church. We know there will be. The bigger issue, rather, is what are we going to do with that conflict? How will we respond to it?

### 2. The Solution

"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'" (Acts 6:2-4).

### 3. The Lesson

#### Implication #1: A Healthy Church Unapologetically Prioritizes the Ministry of Gospel Word

The Word of God is the seed of the church. If you stop scattering the seed, the church won't grow. There will be no fruit. It starts with this. The world doesn't need another social club or social service or phil-

anthropic non-profit. It needs the gospel. The good *news*. The good *Word*. Christianity isn't first about what we are to do for God or for others. It's about what God has done for us in Jesus at Calvary. That's where it starts. And if you lift up anchor from that to go busy yourself with, to go "devote" yourself to, something else . . . that's where it ends. There would be no more Christianity or church if there's no more Word.

#### Implication #2: A Healthy Church Passionately Promotes the Ministry of Gospel Deed

Even still, the ministry of gospel deed is just as important as the ministry of gospel word. Just because one comes first doesn't mean that one is inherently better. These two are equal in importance but different in priority. One necessarily precedes the other, but that doesn't mean it matters more than the other. You have them both in the church, or you don't truly have either.

#### Implication #3: A Healthy Church Prayerfully Appoints Qualified Leaders

Deacons are appointed both to *liberate* the elders so they can focus on the broader ministry of the word and to *legitimize* that ministry of the word by serving and loving those under the elders' care.

#### Implication #4: A Healthy Church Happily Empowers All of Its Members

This isn't just top-down, do-what-we-say, domineering leadership. This is letting in the rest of the church members. They have the Spirit of God too and there's wisdom in their perspective on the matter.

#### Implication #5: A Healthy Church Winsomely Engages the Unbelieving World!

One of the greatest evidences we have for the reality and validity and power of the gospel is the church community that's been transformed by that gospel. How do you know Jesus is alive? Well, people should be able to look at the church, his *body*, and see as much!



## Reflection Questions

- Consider Mercy Hill as a church. Which of the five implications listed above do we do best would you say? Which do we need most to grow in? How can you help?!

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## Our Mission & Values

*Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city through the good news of Jesus Christ.*

**FAITH:** The Way Back to God | We are redeemed to enjoy intimate presses our church *upwards* in love

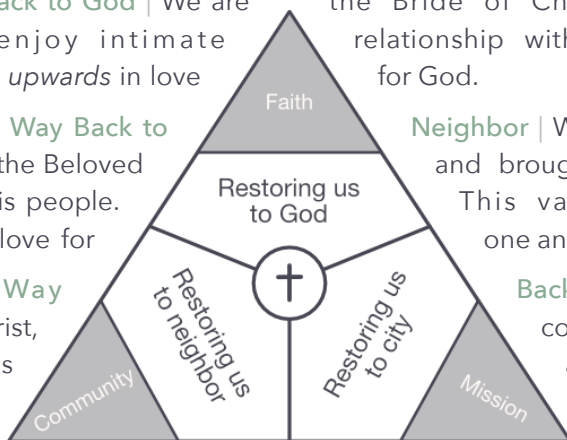
**COMMUNITY:** The Way Back to Christ, adopted in the Beloved relationship with his people. church *inwards* in love for

**MISSION:** The Way the Embassy of Christ, Savior to be his value presses our in love for the

the Bride of Christ, created and relationship with him. This value for God.

**Neighbor** | We are the Family of and brought into covenantal relationship with his people. This value presses our one another.

**Back to City** | We are commissioned by the ambassadors. This church *outwards* unbelieving.



## Your Next Steps

When approaching the Christian faith and life, it can be confusing to know where to even begin. Come find us at the Next Steps Table after the service—it would be our joy to help you along in the journey! And if you're a visitor, we have a special gift bag for you. Don't miss it!



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Welcome to Mercy Hill Church.  
We are so glad you've joined us today!

## Announcement Spotlight

### International Food Fair (Potluck) - Sign Up Today!!

God's heart is for the nations to know him, enjoy him, and glorify him forever. As a way of both celebrating and reminding ourselves of this, we thought it would be a fun way to kick off our Missions Emphasis Week by sharing a meal together composed of signature dishes from countries around the world. We are very excited for this, but we need your help! Please see the details below . . .

- **When?** Sunday, March 17th, after the service, beginning at around 12:00pm.
- **Where?** The meal will be held in the dining area off of the Sanctuary.
- **What?** We're asking that each of you sign up to bring a dish from a country different than your own. If possible, it should serve approximately 6-8 people. In the sign-up form that follows, you'll find a selection of countries to choose from as well as a suggested dish. This is just to get you started. You can make whatever dish you prefer. If you need help, we are happy to provide further suggestions. And, if desired, you can even just purchase something from a nearby restaurant.

For more info and to sign up, scan the QR code below!

If you have questions, feel free to reach out to Joey at [joey@mercyhillchurch.org](mailto:joey@mercyhillchurch.org) or Megan at [kids@mercyhillchurch.org](mailto:kids@mercyhillchurch.org).

### Missions Emphasis Week - March 17-24!

Easter @ Mercy Hill!

Scan the QR code below for more info!

For clickable content and more announcements,



scan this code to head to our Communications Hub!

Or find it online at [mercyhillchurch.org/communications-hub](https://mercyhillchurch.org/communications-hub).