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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks
Baptist Church**
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Called To Serve Acts 6:1-8

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson examines facts to clearly see how God often calls people within the church and the outcome of those who are **Called to Serve**. The study's aim is to show that God is at work in our day and calling people to serve in the church. The study's application is to be alert to how God might be calling us to serve.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

We read in the Bible of God speaking in various ways to call prophets and people like the Apostle Paul to their unique ministries. We should not think this is the norm, however, either in biblical times or our own. The norm is for people of God to step forward to serve Him voluntarily in response to what His Word teaches, in gratitude for what He has done, and in answer to needs that exist. We see this pattern in the New Testament, where the church is directed to choose its own leaders but is given specific qualifications those leaders must meet (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9). Rather than wait for some new supernatural revelation, the church is to apply to the selection process the biblical revelation of what leaders should look like. Probably the earliest example of this is found in Acts 6, from which our text comes. The rapidly growing church demanded the full attention of the apostles. They saw the need to devote themselves to teaching and to prayer, but the physical needs of the widows among them needed attention as well, especially when there seemed to be some disparity in how the church was providing for them (Acts 6:1-2). Rather than being distracted from their primary responsibilities, the apostles told the congregation to choose seven men from among them that they could "appoint over this business" of distributing money or food to the needy widows. There were three qualifications these men had to meet. First, they had to be of "honest report." This simply means a good reputation. They had to have exemplary and consistent character. In other words, they were to be godly men about whom nothing bad could be said. Second, they were to be "full of the Holy Ghost." Every believer enjoys the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, of course (Rom. 8:9), but what seems to be described here are persons characterized by genuine sensitivity to the Spirit's work and direction. They were to be spiritually mature men. Finally, those selected for this work also were to be "full of wisdom." This describes more than mere managerial know-how; it speaks of the ability to apply biblical principles to life. They were to be examples of godly living. What is striking is that these qualifications were so lofty; not everyone in the early church could meet them. Yet the job itself was quite simple. While a certain level of management and even mathematical skill might be required, almost any reliable person could have handled it. The lesson here is that God does not want people who are merely willing to serve; He wants godly, spiritual, biblically wise people who are willing to serve Him in any role in His church. We should not sit and wait for a divine voice to direct us into service. There are opportunities to serve if we are willing to serve, and they are often revealed to us in the form of needs—the needs of people and the needs of the church—are often revealed to us by church leaders. Our responsibility is to prepare ourselves to serve by developing godly character, growing in wisdom, and submitting to the work and leading of the Holy Spirit.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

The more we serve Christ, the less we will serve self

POEM FOR THE WEEK:

When we are involved in serving
And meeting each other's needs,
We're imitating the Master
In thoughts and words and deeds.

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men

(Phil 2:7 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Jan 2, 2001)

Series: God's Urgent Call

UNIT: Calls in the New Testament

NEXT WEEK

Called to Break Down Barriers

(Acts 8:26-39)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Characteristics of a Servant Leader (Acts 6:1-4)

Has a commitment to God's Word (1-2)

- A commitment to mature through constant use of God's word (Heb 5:11-14)
- A commitment to correctly interpret and apply God's word (2 Tim 2:15)
- A commitment to meditate and study God's word (Deut 6:6-9)
- A commitment to search God's word to validate what has been heard (Acts 17:11)
- A commitment to faithfully study word to be equipped for good works (2 Tim 3:14-17)
- A commitment to allow the Holy Spirit to teach the meaning of God's word (Luke 24:45)
- A commitment to heed the warning of God's word (1 Cor 10:9-11)

Selects and follows godly leadership (3)

- Select leadership that doesn't lead into sin (Mark 9:42)
- Select leadership that is accountable (James 3:1)
- Follow leadership that follows and teaches the truths of the faith (1 Tim 4:6-8)
- Follow leadership that teaches about the kingdom of God (Matt 13:52)
- Follow leadership that is faithful to the trust given them (1 Cor 4:1-2)
- Follow leadership that are ministers of the new covenant (2 Cor 3:6)
- Select leaders that are above reproach (1 Tim 3:2-7)
- Follow leaders that are selected by the Holy Spirit as overseers and shepherds (Acts 20:28)
- Follow leaders that are willing and eager to serve (1 Pet 5:2-3)
- Follow and submit to leaders so that their work is a joy (Heb 13:17)

Has a devotion to prayer and ministry (4)

- Devotion to prayer to keep from anxiousness (Philip. 4:6)
- Devotion to prayer because it can be powerful and effective (James 5:16)
- Devotion to prayer because it pleases God (Proverbs 15:8)
- Devotion to prayer to aid in finding God's desires (Jeremiah 29:13)
- Devotion to prayer because it is God's will (1 Thes. 5:16-18)
- Devotion to prayer because it is commanded by Jesus (Luke 18:1)
- Devotion to ministry because it will reap a reward (Gal 6:9)
- Devotion to ministry because it is never in vain (1 Cor 15:58)
- Devotion to ministry because it leads to eternal life (Rom 2:7)
- Devotion to ministry is profitable both for the giver and the receiver (Titus 3:8)
- Devotion to ministry results in praise and thanksgiving to God (2 Cor. 9:12-13)

Power of a Servant Leader (Acts 6:5-8)

A ministry filled with faith (5-7)

- Filled with faith results in unity of the Church body (Phil 1:27)
- Filled with faith provides spiritual strength (Col 2:6-7)
- Filled with faith is commanded for a Christian (1 Tim 6:11-12)
- Filled with faith is relying on God (2 Cor 1:9)
- Filled with faith expresses itself through love (Gal 5:6)
- Filled with faith is being certain of things not seen (Heb 11:1)
- Filled with faith is accompanied by deeds (James 2:17)

A ministry with power (8)

- Power that is glorious (2 Cor 3:7-11)
- Power that is at work in us (Gal 2:8)
- Power that comes from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:4-5)
- Power that is part of the kingdom of God (1 Cor 4:20)
- Divine power (2 Cor 10:3-6)
- Power that strengthens the inner being (Eph 3:16)
- Power of the gospel (1 Thess 1:5)
- Power that keeps one from being ashamed to testify about God (2 Tim 1:8)