The Need for Servant Leaders

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[0:00] Well, good morning. It's good to see all of you. This morning, I would encourage you! to open up your Bibles, if you would please, to Acts chapter 6. Acts chapter 6, if you're using the Pew Bible, it's on page 914. You can see across the heading or the banner of our sermon series, Becoming the Church. And the goal is not to just to teach about what the church is from the scripture, Acts chapter 1 through 6 and following, so that we kind of fill up our heads with, well, this is what happened in the book of Acts only, but that as we look at the scriptures, we begin to discover when God is building his church, what is the church meant to be? What is the church meant to look like? How does the church show up?

And what makes this church healthy? And so as we've been looking through this time together in the book of Acts, that's been the goal. The goal is how can we become this kind of church? How can we enjoy the benefits of life and health and all of the various elements and features that we have seen take place in this church that have been so exhilarating and exciting as we've been working our way through? I want to, as we begin, I want to just talk about in introduction, again, what is the church briefly? And so as we look at what the church looks like and how it's developing, it's adjusting, it's maturing in its development from Acts 1 through 6, we can kind of get an understanding of what does the church mean? What are we talking about when we talk about the church? Well, we said going back to the beginning of this year and the start of this series, we define church this way. The church is a group of baptized believers who meet regularly to worship God through Jesus Christ under the guidance of duly appointed leaders.

The church, first and foremost, is a body. It's the body of Christ assembled because of faith in the work of Christ, in the gospel that we have preached to us, his death, his resurrection, and the forgiveness that we can enjoy from our sins because of the work of Christ. And if you've placed your faith in Jesus and asked forgiveness for your sins, you belong to the church. But the local church, and I think that's what this definition is really after, the local church is an assembly of those believers who've committed themselves together underneath the leadership of the pastors and teachers that God has put over the church. We had some defining statements because it's really easy to get confused. We talk about the language of the church and we have just three defining statements I'm going to address briefly right now. First is this, the church is not the building, it's the body.

You've heard that before. Those of you who've been part of this series know we've addressed this. The church is not the building, it's the body. It's not the structure. It's not the place we gather in terms of the four walls that we call the church building, but it's the people. It's the body of Christ. Those whom God has called through to faith because of his grace in calling us to himself through faith. So if you are a believer of Jesus Christ, you, you're the church. And what that means is you're not just the church when we gather on Sunday morning. You are the church wherever you are. You're the church 24 hours a day. We are meant to represent Jesus Christ wherever he's placed you, in your workplace, in your community, in your homes, wherever you are. You are the church and we have the responsibility and the privilege of representing Jesus Christ as his body. Next, the defining statement is this, the church is about Jesus and our connection to him as the head. [4:30] He is the head of the body. He is the one who calls the shots. We exist because of life with Jesus, our association to Jesus, what he's accomplished for us. And so what he says we are to do. We do this in representation of him. Our identity is wrapped up in who Jesus is. We belong together because we've been unified in Christ. The third defining statement is the church is about the gathering that strengthens the going. We do gather. Matter of fact, we're called to gather regularly.

The writer to the Hebrews talks about not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together. And so much the more as you see the day approaching. We have the joy, the privilege, and responsibility

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of gathering together consistently week after week so that we can be encouraged and strengthened and inspired and challenged and comforted. All the things that the church does for itself to equip the body for ministry. And as we engage in the life that God has called us to, there are certain principles that guide what we do. And we've seen that already several times as we've worked our way through. So what is the church meant to do? Well, it has really one objective.

Christ called attention to that objective in Acts chapter 1 verse 8 when it says this, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the other most parts of the earth or to the ends of the earth. That's the objective. We are to be witnesses of Jesus Christ, of his message, of his doctrine, of his life, what he's accomplished. And how do we do this effectively? Well, Christ gave the marching orders in Matthew chapter 28, 19 to 20, when he encouraged the disciples in terms of discipleship. He says this, go therefore and make disciples or witnesses. Those are going to testify about me. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you. And behold, I'm with you always to the end of the age. We are called to be witnesses and we're called as disciples to make other disciples who will in turn be witnesses. That's the primary objective. That's what we've been learning. That's what we've been reminded about the significance of the centrality or primary source of ministry that we've been called to. And the rest of the life of the church is then guided by that principle and also by the governing principles of the first and second great commandment. You know those.

The first is love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. The second is to love your neighbor as yourself. And so as we intend to be witnesses, all the ministry then that lies ahead of us unite around those two principles. Love the Lord, love your neighbor. And so that's why there's worship taking place in the church. That's why there's attention to the Word of God. That's why there's fellowshipping happening. That's why there's buying and selling a possession and distributing to those who have need. There's care that's taking place. Love for the Lord that happens to, in the assembly and company of God's people and the care for the body of Christ that we've seen throughout this study.

We take one step further today and we see now how the church has now applying this principle. How will the church be aware of the needs that are around them and how will the church address those needs in love to the Lord and expressing care for their neighbors? Care for those who God has put in their company who have need. This ministry team will be employed. This ministry team will be raised up and it's meant to address these very specific ministry needs among them. Love for God, love for God's people.

[8:58] You know, it's through this context that we're going to see this morning that ministries will grow. And as we have at Maranatha, we have a number of ministries that are intended to address very specific functions, very specific needs among our body. It is in response to our desire as a church to love our neighbor as ourself. There is nowhere in the scripture that says, thou shalt have a children's ministry. Thou shalt have a wanna. Thou shalt have a student ministry.

Thou shalt have soccer camp. There's nowhere you're going to find that in scripture. That is an expression of our desire as a church to address very tangible needs among our body and we do that as a fellowship.

And God is gonna raise up leaders as we're gonna see in our passage today to address a very specific need. Now, I don't know about you, but I am blessed. I am so encouraged by the passage today to know that being in the church is not about a spectator sport. Being a church is about participation.

Being a church is not just about having certain key leaders in place and participating with them and listening to their ministry and taking part of that by just observation. No, this is not a spectator sport. This is meant for us to engage. That God has given us all the joy of participating in the ministry that he's called us to. That this healthy church that we're going to look at, we have looked at over the past several weeks, exists because there are faithful people who have invested. There are faithful people who have participated. There are faithful people who are contributing to the strength and health of this body. And that just excites me to know that if we're going to be the kind of healthy, faithful church that God has called us to be, it means that every single one of us need to be engaged in this kind of ministry in some way or the other. That God has called every single one of us to participate in the life of the person sitting right next to you, sitting across from you. We've all benefited, I think, we've all benefited from faithful servants of the Lord Jesus. My guess is that every

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single one of us can call attention to that one or two or maybe a dozen people who've had a significant impact in your life because of their faithful contribution of ministry in a key area. They've addressed an issue. They have contributed to that issue in terms of helping to provide care and encouragement with whatever that issue is. And God has used them instrumentally to help you grow in your spiritual life. Now, I don't want to mention all of the teachers and leaders that we have here at Maranatha because I'm sure to miss them. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to draw from some of the people in my past growing up as a child, some people, instrumental people in my past that have had a key, made a key impact in my life.
I think about Miss Fisher. Miss Fisher was a professor at Cedarville University. Okay, so distinguished professor, Cedarville University. And guess where Miss Fisher engaged my life? [12:44] She engaged my life as a primary Sunday school teacher, a third to sixth grade Sunday school teacher. And she was used instrumentally in my life for at least, she was there for at least 25 years.

I wasn't in third and sixth grade for 25 years. I was a slow student, I have to admit, but I wasn't that slow. Every single week, you could count on Miss Fisher. Every single week, she was carrying the load.
She was doing it faithfully, consistently. She was doing it with all her might. And I think about Miss Fisher, who's not here in this world anymore. She's enjoying life with Jesus. But for 25 years, she served faithfully and consistently a group of young people at Grace Baptist Church in Cedarville. I think about Mr. Ware, who was responsible for the building and grounds at Cedarville University. So teaching little fifth and sixth grade boys was not in his wheelhouse. And when he was asked to do it, I was there in the very first year he became a teacher of the fifth and sixth grade boys. It was not in his wheelhouse. He was scared to death. But I'll tell you what, those two years, I told him just this past year, I saw him at a conference just a few months ago, and I said, Mr. Ware, I gotta tell you, God used you in my life.
Thank you for your ministry to me as a fifth and sixth grade boy. I think about Don Callen. Don Callen was a basketball coach at Cedarville University. He's coaching basketball, and at least for Sunday school, for those who were in ninth grade to twelfth grade, Don Callen was teaching the students of the ninth to twelfth grade in Sunday school every single week. And during the summer times, he would take mission trips to the Philippines. He would come back, and he taught us as a Sunday school class a song in Filipino. It was rolled away, rolled away, rolled away. And I still remember the words.
It was, and he told me never to sing it, because if there's anybody that actually knows Filipino, then they're going to be, like, disturbed. But it's, Yukinu, Yukinu, Yukinu, Kokolona, Omaniwa, Yukinu. Sumewa, Salenu, Shishiwo, Omotini, Alleluia, Yukinu.
[15:22] I still remember it. I'm not even going to tell you how many years ago that was when I learned that song. But I'm telling you, the ministry that we have to one another is instrumental.

The ministry that God has called us to, as God's people, can change and transform lives. I trust, I trust that all of us will take not only the privilege, but the responsibility of investment, that kind of investment in areas that aren't always easy, that aren't always glamorous, and that don't always get the accolades that we would hope that they would get.
But in the economy of heaven, God knows, and the little hearts and minds that God is using to change, using you to change, they will never forget you. They will never forget the impact that God has used in their life to get them where they are. So that's a, yes, that is a plug for children's ministry. And I would commend it to you that God has given us the joy of serving in that way.
But here we see in Acts chapter 6, this implementation of a service team. Again, it's one more step in the flow of this growing church, this church that is developing and growing. And we're going to see ways in which that team is employed. If you're with me in Acts chapter 6, verses 1 to 6, let me read this for us, and we'll begin. It says, 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 wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer in the ministry of the word. And what they said pleased the whole congregation or the whole gathering. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the

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Holy Spirit and Philip and Prochorus and Nicanor and Timon and Parmenas and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles and they prayed and laid their hands on them.
[17:56] We see, first of all, there is a season of extraordinary growth. We've seen that over the past several weeks, over the past several months as we've been looking at the book of Acts. There is a reason for employing and enlisting new people to help. This church is absolutely exploding, exploding in a very good way. We've seen this in chapter 2. There are 3,000 people that come to faith. We saw this in chapter 4. 5,000 people come to faith. But we saw this in Acts chapter 5, verse 14. More than ever, believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.

This church is growing. And because this church is growing now, it's also growing in needs. So why does Luke call attention to this feature over and over and over again? And there could be a number of reasons, but there are a few that came to my mind. I think Luke wants to emphasize, call attention to the work of God among his people. He wants us to recognize God God is working. God is accomplishing his purposes. God's word will not fail. You can trust him.
God said that he was going to build his church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And here we see this example of that very thing taking place. God's word is advancing. I also think it's to underscore the power of the gospel. It wasn't a random word that was being spoken. It was the message of Jesus Christ. It was the gospel at play. I think also to supply to us a confidence that it's the word of God that changes hearts. If I were to ask for a show of hands this morning, say, do you want to be in a healthy church? I'm not asking you to actually raise your hand. My guess is every single one of us would say, yes, we want to be a part of a healthy church. We want to be a part of a church that is growing. We want to be a part of a church that's unified, that's fellowshipping, that's worshiping, that's encouraging one another, that gets to see great things happening, the great work of God among his people. We want to be part of that kind of church. Well, the confidence that we get from the scriptures is that God wants to use those kinds of people, but they need to step in. They need to be part of the ministry that God has called them to be part of, and God has called all of us to be part of it in some way. And I think it's also important to see that it's happening in a season. Notice the introductory words, in those days. In those days. You see, it's important to observe lest we become discouraged. Because you probably heard healthy churches grow, and I think generally that is true. But there are churches across the nation and across the world, as it were, that are experiencing great persecution. And because of that, the growth that they're experiencing is limited. It's been stymied because of oppression and adversity and hardship. Now, the gospel, the gospel will continue to have its way in hearts, but it won't always look this way. This was a season. It's not always going to be this way. Matter of fact, in the next couple of chapters, we're going to see, as we turn the page to Acts chapter 7, and then to Acts chapter 8, the multitudes that are gathering, the strength that is happening there in Jerusalem is going to come to a conclusion. Persecution is going to happen. Hardship is going to hit. And now the gospel is going to move out. And the church in Jerusalem is going to be rather stagnant in its growth. It's not going to experience the same kind of multiplying effect that it's experienced at this point.
[22:06] The Jerusalem church will be strong. But for the next several decades, it's not going to see the same progress that it saw in its early days. And so, lest we become discouraged, we need to understand that God's work will be accomplished, but it's not always going to be in the way we think it is.

It comes in seasons. See, there is church growth today, but that church growth is often happening in the midst of great persecution. Open Doors International reports that 388 million Christians are experiencing high levels of persecution and discrimination because of their faith.
That is one Christian out of every seven. One out of every seven Christians in the world is experiencing this kind of persecution. That's one in five in Africa. That's two out of every five in Asia. And the rate of persecution is growing across the world. Just in one year, it's increased by eight million people. There are 13 Christians killed every single day for the name of Christ. 13 Christians every single day. That's one every two hours. There's approximately nine Christians that are abducted every single day for their faith. There are 10 churches or Christian properties that are attacked every single day.
There are 614 Christians forced to flee their homes every single day. Persecution has come to the world.

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[23:48] It will eventually come to America. And are we going to be ready to do what God has called us to do, to see that God's, to stabilize our hearts, to know that God's word will have its proper effect, whether we see it visibly or just know that he's accomplishing his purposes somewhere in the world.

The disciples were increasing in number. And while there was a benefit to this, there was also challenges that we're going to turn to in just a moment here. You see, it was a season of extraordinary growth, but it's also, there was a situation that required immediate attention. We see that in verses one, verse one. It says this, now in those 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. That's the situation. The people are complaining. This group who is there, these Hellenistic Jews, are feeling like they have been neglected in the distribution that's happening.

They're not being cared for. Their widows are not being cared for. And now the enemy, our adversary, the devil, is choosing a third way to oppose God's people. Initially, we saw he tried to break apart the church through opposition of its leaders. We saw that in chapter four and chapter five.

Then he tried to have sin embed itself in the people so it would begin to break apart the church. And now he's trying to divide the body itself. These Hellenistic Jews were Greek-speaking Jews that understood the culture, the Greek culture, the Greek language. If you've studied at all the history of Israel, you know that there were a northern ten tribes and a southern two tribes. And that because of their rebellion against the Lord, there were different captivities that took place. The Assyrian captivity and then the Babylonian captivity. And people were dispersed. God's people were dispersed around the known world. And then we come to Acts chapter two and we see that God is beginning to assemble those people again. They've come for these feasts during the Jewish calendar, particularly the Jewish Passover. And we saw in Acts chapter two, verse five, that there were men dwelling in Jerusalem,

Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. Then verse nine says, Parthians and Medes and Elamites in residence of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus in Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt in parts of Libya, belonging to Cyrene and visitors from Rome. Both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians.

[26:47] We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. God was doing a work. He was beginning to assemble these Jews that had been dispersed among the nations. And now they're finding their way back to Israel. Now they're discovering the gospel from the preaching of Peter and they're giving their life to Christ. And so you have these Greek speaking Jews who are now surrounded by native Jews from Israel who know Aramaic, who are familiar with the customs of their own people. And you can imagine some of the the conflict that may begin to happen among those two groups. The cultural distinctions then begin to accentuate the economic distinctions. In Jewish society, widows were particularly needy. And especially these widows who have traveled maybe with their husbands initially from these other regions. And their place of security, their families, their homes, their properties were all far away. And now they're coming to Jerusalem. They don't have those properties. They don't have that income. And especially if now once their husbands have died, they're in need. And the church has a responsibility and the privilege of addressing those needs. So there was a season of growth and there was this situation requiring their assistance. But now we find this solution in verse 2 that's put in place. The solution of identifying service teams. Acts chapter 2 verse 2 says this,

And the twelve summoned the full number of disciples and said, It is not right that we should give up the preaching of 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.

We see here two primary roles that are being formed. This church is beginning to develop. It's beginning to mature. It's beginning to adapt. And these apostles who have been put in place to kind of lay the foundation for this church are now adapting to the difficulties that they're experiencing and have a solution here. How do we, as God's people, love our neighbor? Well, we need to address this need.

And I love how they do this in verse 2. Notice, they summoned the full number of disciples. I think that's extraordinary. Because the apostles could have made this unilateral decision about this, but

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instead, what do they do? They invite all the disciples, all the believers, to be part of this solution. They want them to recognize that God needs to work through his people to address the issues or the concerns that are in place. And so, these two primary roles are distinguished for us by this word, deacon. And you can't see it in the text, but the word to serve there in verse 2.
At the very end of verse 2, it says, we should not give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. That word, to serve, is the word diakoneo. It's the verb of service. It's the verb deacon, to deacon.
[30:29] And then at the end of verse 4, the apostles say, we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word. That word ministry is the noun word diakoneo. Again, both. Service. Both. Deaconing.

They're deaconing. And so, these two primary roles are dependent upon service. The apostles understand the primary service that God has called them to, the teaching of the word into prayer. But it's not to diminish the significance of the other service that's taking place. The service that needs to happen by these service teams. These deacons who are in place, who are called to serve tables.
Up to the people, up to this point, the people have been cared for through the administration of the apostles. We saw that in Acts chapter 4, verses 34 to 35. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought them to the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet and it was distributed to each as they had need.
The apostles had kind of orchestrated or administrated this service ministry up to this point. But they recognize that there is something that requires some specialization.
They need some Greek speakers who are able to address the culture that they're unfamiliar with, the language that they're unfamiliar with. You see, the Jews had a kind of a weekly financial aid program that was kind of built into the system.
[32:08] Every Friday, they would give something called a kupa, which consisted of money for 14 days. And they would distribute that to the people every Friday, those who had need. There was also something called the tamoi. It was for non-residents and transients and consisted of food and drink, which were delivered from house to house. And there seems to be this combination of both taking place here. The apostles are administering this financial aid to the people because they recognize they're aware of the problems.

And you've got to appreciate the heart of the apostles. I mean, imagine being in a church of literally tens of thousands of individuals. And you have a small group over here who's complaining that they're being forgotten, that the rest of the church is being cared for.
What would be the temptation of a leader who is over a church of 20,000, and you have a little group over here complaining? What would be the temptation?
We guys just knock it off. Can't you see we've got a lot of work to do? I mean, give us a break. Things are working well. Figure it out yourself. That would be very easy to do.
But you've got to love the response of the apostles here. They have a heart that's listening. They have a heart that cares. They have a heart that's humble.
[33:40] And every healthy church must recognize gifted people. And that's what we find as this next step in the development and maturity of this church, recognizing a need and employing gifted people.

Notice it was initiated and led by the apostles in response to this complaint. And there was this awareness of this growing need. Luke emphasizes the importance of each role. He provides this linking term of deaconing and service that helps to correspond to both functions.
So there are roles to play, but there's also qualifications for the man. And we see those qualifications in verse 3. Because not every individual is fit to lead.
And we want to make sure you're employing gifted servants to lead in gifted ways. Verse 3 says, 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.
There's at least four qualifications here. One is they're from among you. They're people you've seen. They're people who've been serving. They've been consistent. You know them.
[34:56] They're familiar to you. People who are serving among you because your needs are being derived from the body. And so we want to make sure that it's the body that's addressing the issues.

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Notice they have good reputation. They're men of character. They've been consistent in public and in private. They're men who are exemplary in living out the Word of God in their life.
This pure living, this mark of the Spirit. They're full of the Spirit. You can see this fruit of the Spirit that's marking them as individuals.
This power of God that's so evident. And there's wisdom. Wisdom in making decisions. Wisdom in discernment. Wisdom in carefully applying the Scriptures. Wisdom in caring for one another.
And we see that this is a church that's recognizing the function of qualified leaders. I want you to understand that while there are qualified leaders, I don't want to diminish the fact that we are all called to serve in some way or the other.
[36:02] Matter of fact, the same word, deaconing, applies to every believer in this fellowship. 1 Peter 4, verses 10-11 says this, As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another.

That's the word diakoneo. Serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. Whoever speaks is one who speaks oracles of God. Whoever serves, diakoneo, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies.
In order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. God is not indifferent to the kinds of men and women that serve the body.
But He does call us all into service in one way or the other. We also see there's specific responsibility. There's specific responsibility. They were to care for the Hellenists.
There must have been an administrative piece. There must have been a leadership piece. There must have been a service piece. Certainly there was a caring piece.
[37:10] And all of these pieces of their service to the body needed to happen. But there's three observations I want to make just briefly here.

First, their responsibility was delegated. It was a delegated responsibility. It was not self-derived. It was not self-determined.
It was the apostles who set the responsibility. It was the apostles who dictated how many men were required. It was the apostles who laid out the qualifications.
It wasn't a group of guys that said, Hey, you know what? I think there's a problem here. How about you, you, you, and you? How about we go and take care of business? No, it wasn't self-initiated or self-derived.
It was a delegated responsibility. That's important to understand. Second, it was a specific responsibility. They are given specific set of parameters for the service that they're to oversee.
[38:13] Their responsibility was to the Hellenist widows. A certain demographic of individuals. They were not responsible for the non-Hellenistic Jews.

They were entrusted with the responsibility of their task. But it was delegated by the apostles. They were responsible to report back to the apostles. Third, it was temporary.
Temporary in that as long as the Hellenist widows needed help, their responsibility was to help. They were on call. Specific ministry to care for those Hellenistic widows as long as those Hellenistic widows needed help.
And as we turn the page to Acts chapter 8, we find that Stephen is martyred. We find that Philip is moved out of Jerusalem. We find that the need for the Hellenistic widows doesn't exist anymore because the church has pretty much scattered out of Jerusalem.
It was a temporary designation, a temporary role. As we continue to move our way through understanding what deacons is, we turn to verses 5 and 6, and we see the selection of these servant leaders.
[39:24] The selection of these leaders. We find that in verses 5 and 6. It says, I love this word.

It pleased the people. Their complaint had been heard. Their issue had been validated. And individuals were supplied.
A plan was put in place. And the people support the solution. In verse 2, it's the full number who's assembled. And notice verse 5, the full number were pleased.
The people select the deacons. Seven men were selected. They're selected based upon their qualifications. And certainly they're recognized by the assembly as possessing these characteristics.
The Old Testament laying on of hands deals with a transfer of some personal characteristics or responsibilities. And so by laying their hands, the apostles laying their hands on these servant

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leaders.
[40:47] They are delegating authority to them to serve in this specific way. And finally we find in verse 7, we find the success. The success of their service.

What Satan intended to blow up this church. What he knew was going to create division if it wasn't addressed faithfully.
What was going to keep the ministry from moving forward so all these multitudes would no longer flourish. This plan and the apostles dealing with this specific issue now leads to success.
Notice this, verse 7. And the word of God continued to increase. And the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem.
The number of superlatives in just this verse is astounding. The increase, the multiplication, the great many of priests, and the multiplied greatly in Jerusalem.
[41:56] All of these superlatives that are used to help us understand that when God's people are sensitive to the Spirit's work and sensitive to God's people who are in need, that God will multiply, continue to multiply His church and multiply the ministry that God has given to them.

God's Spirit is moving now in the hearts of people, the people in Jerusalem. But I think most significantly, it's surprising that there are priests now who are coming to faith in God who had been resistant all the way up to this point.
Now the door has been opened and ministry is happening and the church continues to multiply through faithful leaders who are serving.
Apostles who are serving through the Word, deacons who are serving, just serving the body, the hands and feet of Jesus and addressing the material needs that are resident within the congregation.
God has called us, God has called every single one of us to service. Throughout the Scriptures, the New Testament addresses us as servants or diakonia, servants of Christ, servants of God.
[43:19] We have the joy, the responsibility to do, to carry out that work of ministry and to enjoy the benefits of God's work in our lives and the benefits of God's work in the lives of those we serve.

may God help us as we seek to understand and implement the significance of service. I wonder today, is there somebody that you can serve today that would benefit from this ministry touch of the Lord Jesus from you today?
Who is that in the name of that person that God is placing on your heart and mind even now? Like, you know what? I think that person needs a word of encouragement.
I think that person, I'm aware of a need. I wonder if I can address that need. You know, that person right now needs some prayer. I'm going to go this week and intentionally find a way to encourage and comfort them with some prayer.
this church is amazing in terms of your service. I am so blessed by the work of God in each of you.
[44:37] And there are things that I hear that God is doing through you. There are lots of things I am completely unaware of, but I hear through the grapevine and through, you know, there's lots of time that goes by and I'm like, oh, they did that?

I praise the Lord for you because of God's work in your life and I trust that our service to the saints will lead to increased and multiplied joy and multiplied thanksgivings to God.
May God help us to be agents of service to the body. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for your Holy Spirit and thank you for the gifts that you've given to us to serve that we don't have to depend on what we bring to the table.
We just have to depend upon the power of your Spirit working through us. Make us aware and make us available and give us courage to go.
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. God bless you. Have a great day. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
[45:46] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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