

w/b 26<sup>th</sup> November 2017

THEME: 3-2-1 WE HAVE LIFT OFF - THE CHOOSING OF THE SEVEN  
- LIFE APPLICATION

PASSAGE: ACTS 6:1-7

*In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. <sup>2</sup> So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. <sup>3</sup> Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them <sup>4</sup> and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."*

*<sup>5</sup> This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. <sup>6</sup> They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.*

*<sup>7</sup> So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.*

LAUNCH

Can you remember a time when you made a 'good' or 'polite' complaint and a time when you made a 'bad' or 'rude' complaint? What were the key differences and how did they end up?

Who is the best complainer that you can think of in the world of TV/film or books? Sometimes we are drawn to such characters. Why do you think this is?

DISCOVERY

What is the dispute amongst the believers in the early church and what were the causes?

How do the apostles deal with the complaint?

What are some of the alternative ways they could have dealt with it that would have ended less well?

If we deal with complaint badly or dish it out badly what sort of insecurities can this reveal in ourselves?

Why don't the apostles take over the problem themselves and what reason do they give for not doing so?

This response could have been considered high and mighty, dismissive or just plain lazy. Why in this situation is it none of these things

In what areas of your Christian life are you in danger of focusing on the trivial and marginalising the essential?

The distinction between the Judaeo Christians and the Greek Christians was significant (language, geography, background, traditions) to name but a few. Along what lines can division occur in our church and how can we move quickly to overcome them?

What are the key qualities of those appointed as deacons? Why are these qualities important in resolving the problem at hand?

'Social action in a Christian context can only be successfully completed by those who are full of the Holy Spirit'. Do you agree? Why or why not?

What new areas or initiatives in social action do we need to consider as a church (feel free to send any good suggestions to me via email)

#### APPLICATION

Pray for unity in the church and that any possible division would be resolved quickly and biblically

Pray that we would all learn to give and receive complaint far better than we do now

Pray for key social action projects in the church (Bags of Food/ Debtscape/ Oak tree Cafe). Pray that those leading and helping these initiatives (Heather/John/Diana/Ruth = the leaders) would be full of faith and the Holy Spirit

Consider: How is the Spirit prompting you as to how best to serve in the church?