

The Acts 6:4 Priority

Scripture Reading: Acts 6:1-7

The Apostles were presented with a dilemma. There was a need in the church that was important. It could have consumed much of the Apostle's time and attention. Our Scripture reading shows that they delegated other qualified people to handle this need and other needs like it. Meanwhile, they maintained that the highest priority is to be given to prayer and the ministry of the Word. It is not that they alone were going to pray, preach and teach. As leaders and church planters, they were going to develop the focus of the church, and all other churches, on intimacy with God, power from God, and glory for God. Please carefully consider Ephesians 3:14-21 (cp. Ephesians 6:10-20; Colossians 2:6-10).

If the Apostles had not dealt with practical problems, it would have weakened and distracted the church and her testimony. If the Apostles had stopped what they were doing to handle it themselves, the church would still have been weakened and distracted. How important are all the support ministries of the church! It is like keeping the train from being derailed. How important is prayer and the ministry of the Word! It is like the power that keeps the train moving and the cargo / passengers that makes the whole trip worth it! It is not our main purpose to survive – to go for a ride. It is our purpose to advance the kingdom of Christ! Keeping the Acts 6:4 priority helped the church to stay on that track (Acts 6:7).

Here are some things that we've learned about Jesus Christ that should be in the forefront of our minds as we pray and minister the Word in His name (I Timothy 2:1-8; II Timothy 4:1-2):

- **He is ever-present with us because He gave us His Spirit.**
See Matthew 28:18-20; John 14:16-20; Romans 8:8-10.
- **He is ever-present as our faithful high priest to receive our petitions and to minister grace – to help us personally and also as a church.**
See Hebrews 2:16-18; 3:1; 4:14-16; 10:19-23.
- **He is ever-present as the Living Word of God. His presence is able to powerfully speak to us every time the Word of God is read, heard, remembered, or taught.**
He can even override a false teacher (Philippians 1:15-18 cp. Isaiah 55:10-11). See John 1:1-5,14,16-17; 5:21-27; 6:63; Ephesians 4:20-21 (KJV, NKJV, NASB, WYC – and many other translations); Colossians 3:16; I Thessalonians 2:13; II Timothy 2:8-9; Hebrews 4:12-13; I Peter 1:18-25; Revelation 19:11-13.

The Apostles showed us how to handle problems, so that the main purpose of the church could still be fulfilled. The church's main purpose is summarized in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:44-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8). Previously, in this lesson, it was stated in a different way: *"Intimacy with God, power from God, and glory for God."* Consider the example of the vine, in John 15:1-8. We must abide as branches in the vine (Christ). There will be no fruitfulness unless we are vitally connected to Him, partaking in life and strength from Him. It is a relationship that functions through prayer and the power of the Word. This intimate and powerful life identifies the believer as a true disciple of Christ and brings glory to God.

Acts 6:4 and John 15:1-8 – The living Christ gives life, power, and purpose.

Jesus said, *"...Because I live, you shall live also."* (John 14:19). Paul spoke of, *"...The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus..."* (Romans 8:2). Jesus Christ should be obviously present and actively in charge of our individual lives and in the life of our churches. We benefit from His example ("What would Jesus do" ... "What did Jesus do."). But we must also benefit from having a powerful relationship with Him now (Galatians 2:20; Revelation 3:18-20,22 – note Revelation 1:10 – 3:22).

Jesus and Prayer – Examples of Christ praying

Then – in His earthly ministry

Christ invested more time and exerted more effort praying than in any other aspect of His ministry (e.g., teaching & miracles). See Matthew 4:1-2; Luke 6:12-13; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 9:28; 22:31-32; Matthew 26:36-45 (cp. Luke 22:39-46); Hebrews 5:7-9; John 17:1-26. We must not fall into the sin of prayerlessness (I Samuel 12:20-23 cp. James 4:1-10).

Now – in His heavenly priestly ministry

In Romans 8:26-27,34, we see a network of communication between the Spirit, who indwells us, and the Son of God, who is at the right hand of the Father. Remember Hebrews 2:16-18; 3:1; 4:14-16; 10:19-23.

Jesus and the Ministry of the Word – Examples of Christ using the Word

Then – in His earthly ministry

In John 18:37, Jesus stated His purpose as a minister of God's Word. He came to bear witness to the truth. This truth would glorify God, set people free and make them disciples who would also minister the Word. See also John 5:24; 6:63; 7:16-18; 8:30-32,36; 10:27-28; 17:14-20.

Now – in His heavenly ministry

The Lord is continually working in people's hearts and minds through His Word and through His people. See John 5:25 cp.10:27-28 (The voice of the Son of God = His Spirit / His Word); John 6:63 ("I speak" = present tense); Matthew 28:20; Mark 16:19-20; Acts 16:14; 18:9-10; II Timothy 4:16-18.