

We, the body of Christ called Columbia, continue our exploration of the church, with a different twist this week. Last week, as members from Moscow Central shared their faith stories in our worship experience, we studied the statements of various believers as they share their experiences with Jesus Christ. This week we will be reflecting on the first deacons as they were set apart for ministry.

1. When was the last time you served someone? What did it feel like? When was the last time someone served you? How did that make you feel?
2. Read **Acts 6:1-7**. After reflecting on the Act 6 passage, what do you discover is the reason they added deacons to the ministry leadership?
3. Read **Acts 2:5-11**. What does this passage tell us about some and possibly most of those who became part of the church on the day of Pentecost?
4. Read **Exodus 22:22, Deuteronomy 10:18 and 14:29, and Psalm 146:9**. What do these passages indicate about the Jewish community's emphasis on social ministry?
5. What does **Acts 6:1** reveal about the nature of the dispute within the church? How does this contrast to the statements in **Acts 2:43-47** and **4:32-35**?
6. Note the names of those chosen in **Acts 6:5**. Although the passage only tells us the background of Nicolas and says that he is a proselyte (a convert to Judaism), all of these seven men have Greek, or non-Jewish names. All of the original

12 Apostles were Hebrew or Aramaic speakers who were natives of Palestine. The division mentioned in **Acts 6:1**, between the Hellenist, or Greek-speaking, and the Hebrews, is one between two groups of Jewish believers who are part of the church. The first non-Jewish believers will not become part of the church until **Acts 10**. Notice in **Acts 6:5** who chose these men. Why do you think Luke tells us this?

7. The verb "serve" in Acts 6:2 is *diakoneo*. The cognate noun is *diakonos* (deacons), from which we get "deacon" (cf. 1 Tim 3:8). Read **1 Timothy 3:8-13** and **Acts 6:3**. What are the qualifications you discover for deacons?
8. Read and reflect on **Romans 16:1; Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 1:7 and Colossian 4:7**. What can you learn about deacons from these passages?
9. Read and reflect on **Acts 6:3** again. What were the qualifications listed? How would you determine who fit these? Do you know someone who does fit this description? What makes that person unique and/or gifted for particular service?
10. Do you see any of these qualities in your life? What might be God calling you to do?

Pray that God will show you where he would have you serve in His church. Also, pray that God will help you recognize those He would have serve and encourage them in the ministry He has for them to perform.