

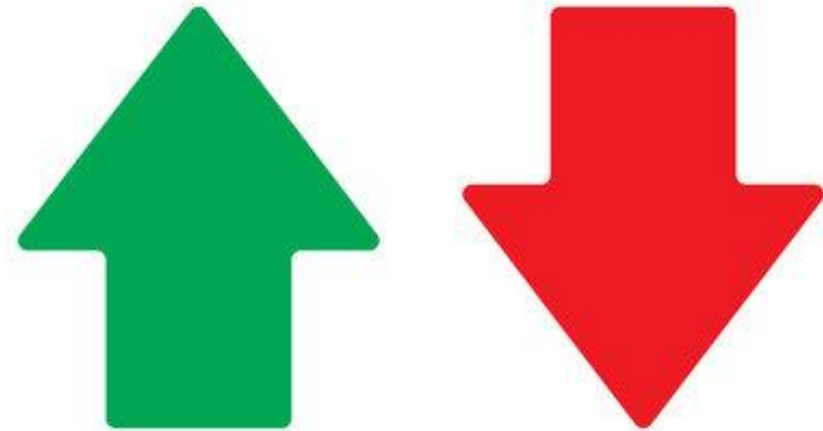


The CHURCH Series

Part 5 – Division

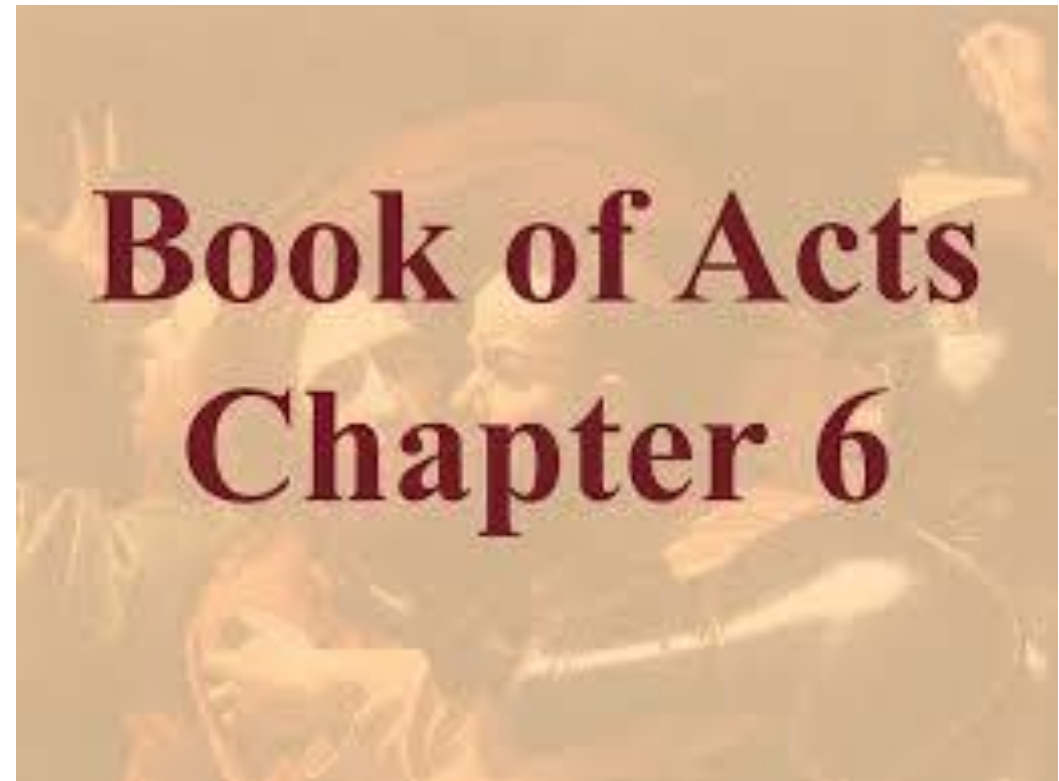
Introduction

- A close glance of the ebb and flow of the first chapters of the book of Acts; show an up/down cycle of events.
- When the church is on the up spiritually and numerically, there is counter 'punch' from the enemy to stop the growth.
- We end chapter 5 on a 'high' but step into chapter 6 and there is a 'low'....



Acts 6:1-2

- *Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying,*
- *there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.*
- *² Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said,*
- *“It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.
Act 6:1-2*



Unconscious B...

- The early church faced a challenge when the Hellenistic (Greek-speaking) Jews complained that their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food.
- The apostles responded by delegating this responsibility to others, showing the importance of dividing tasks within the community.
- This could easily have got out of hand because 'discrimination' is a very human trait.



Division....

- Discrimination has many brothers and sisters:
- Bigotry
- Prejudice
- Partiality
- Favouritism
- Racism
- Bias



Lurking evil....

- This is one of the greatest enemies of the Church which brings about division and schism
- The great evil of slavery was fed constantly by the demon called Mammon and the other called Racism
- Discrimination is a product of the fallen nature of man.



Choose amongst you...

- The complaint from the Hellenistic Jews highlights the need for fairness and equity in the community.
- The early church took the concerns seriously and took steps to ensure that everyone was cared for.
- The selection of the seven men, many of whom had Greek names,
- suggests a deliberate effort to include those from the Hellenistic group,
- promoting inclusivity and reducing racial tensions.



Continually...

- It is important to note that the Leadership of the early church refused to lower the ministry of prayer or the word because of social care.
- This is a crucial lesson:
- *but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”*
Acts 6:4
- A church rich in social action but poor in prayer and the Word, will lack spiritual authority and discernment.



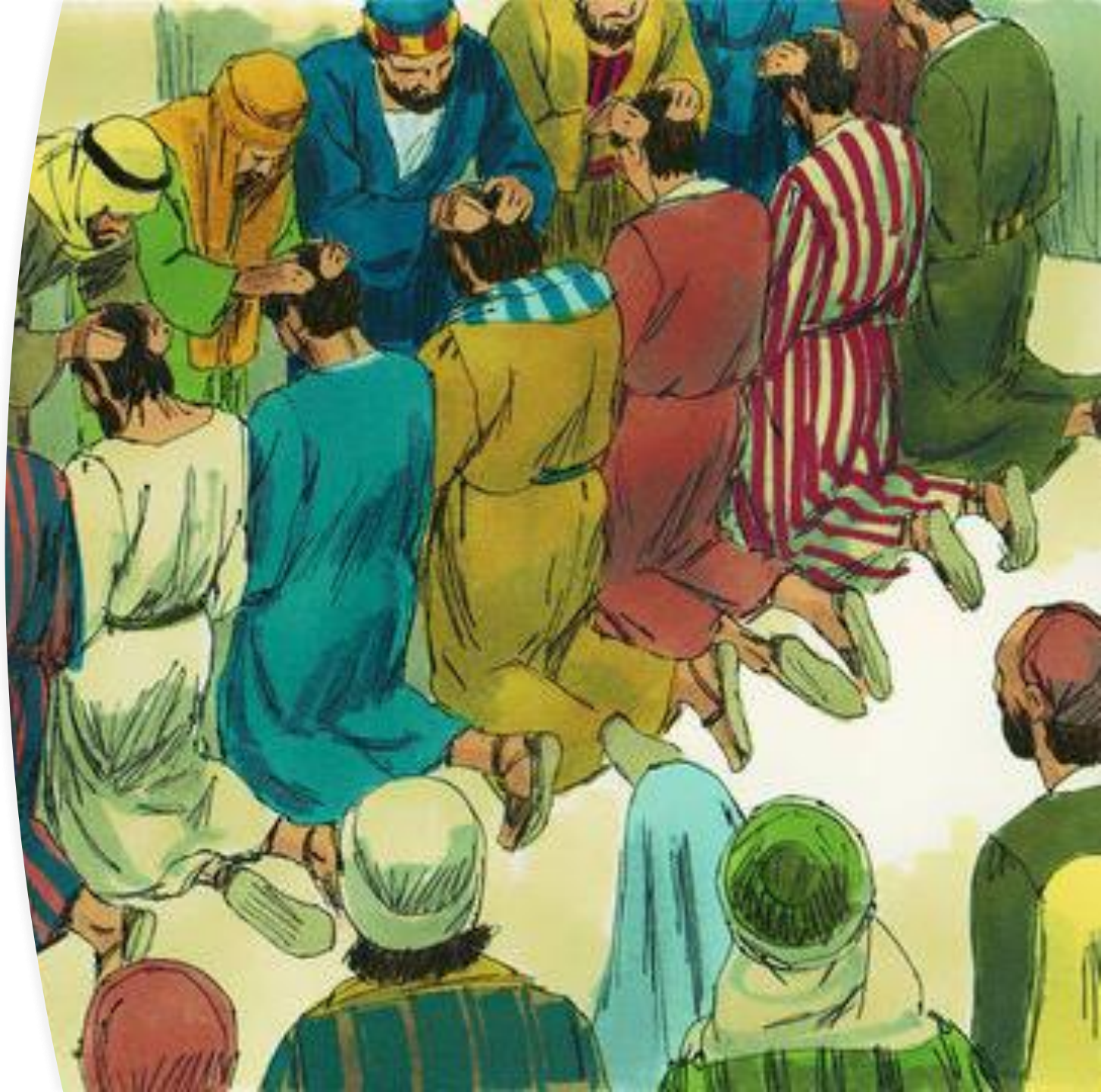
The Seven...

- The seven men chosen are often considered the first deacons, setting a precedent for the role of deacons in the church.
- Their role was to serve the community, allowing the apostles to focus on prayer and ministry of the Word.
- The deacons were not just administrators; they were also men of deep faith and filled with the Holy Spirit.
- This emphasizes that service in the church is both a spiritual and practical calling.



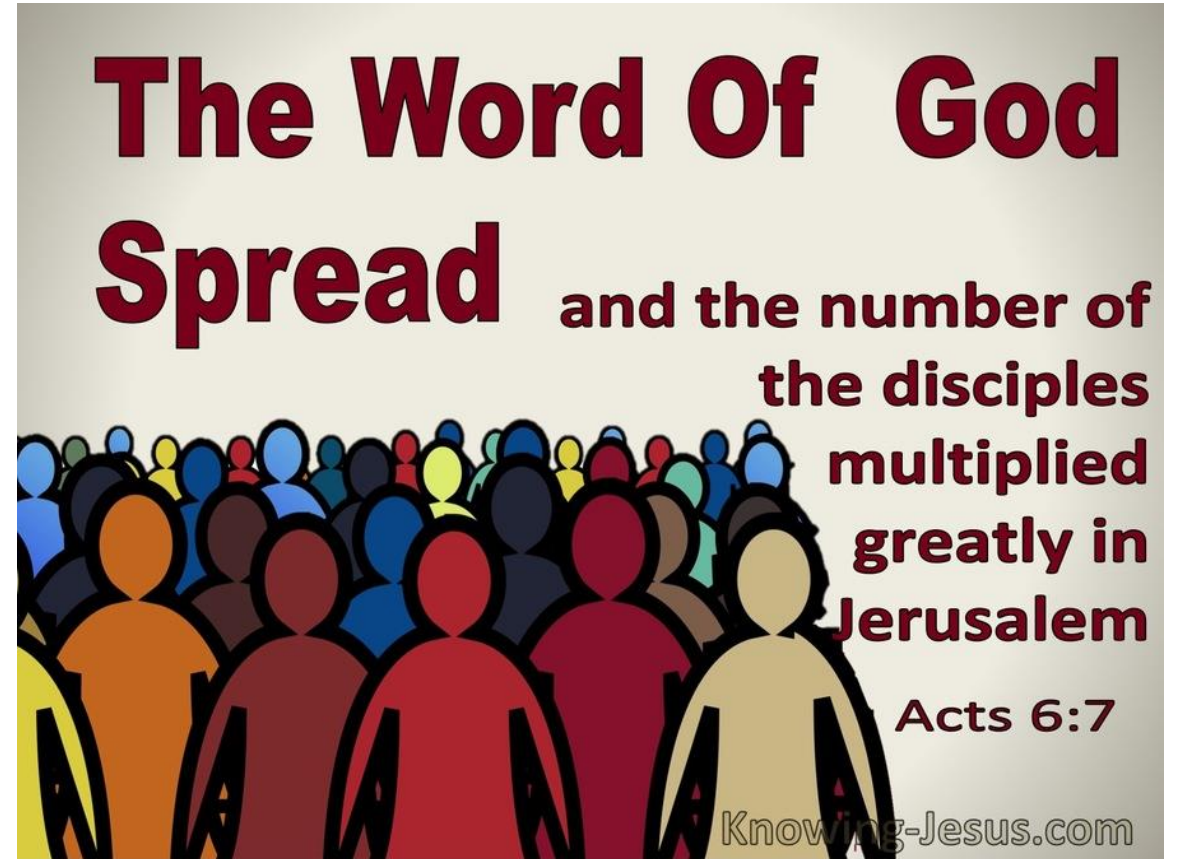
The Seven...

- There is an interesting dynamic in this situation that can easily be missed.
- In as much as the Lord chose the Apostles, these 'deacons' were chosen by the people.
- The dynamic of the collective wisdom and discernment of the congregation should not be lost on us here.
- Many churches and congregations are too Clergy weighted.
- All leaders being chosen by the key leadership without congregational involvement.



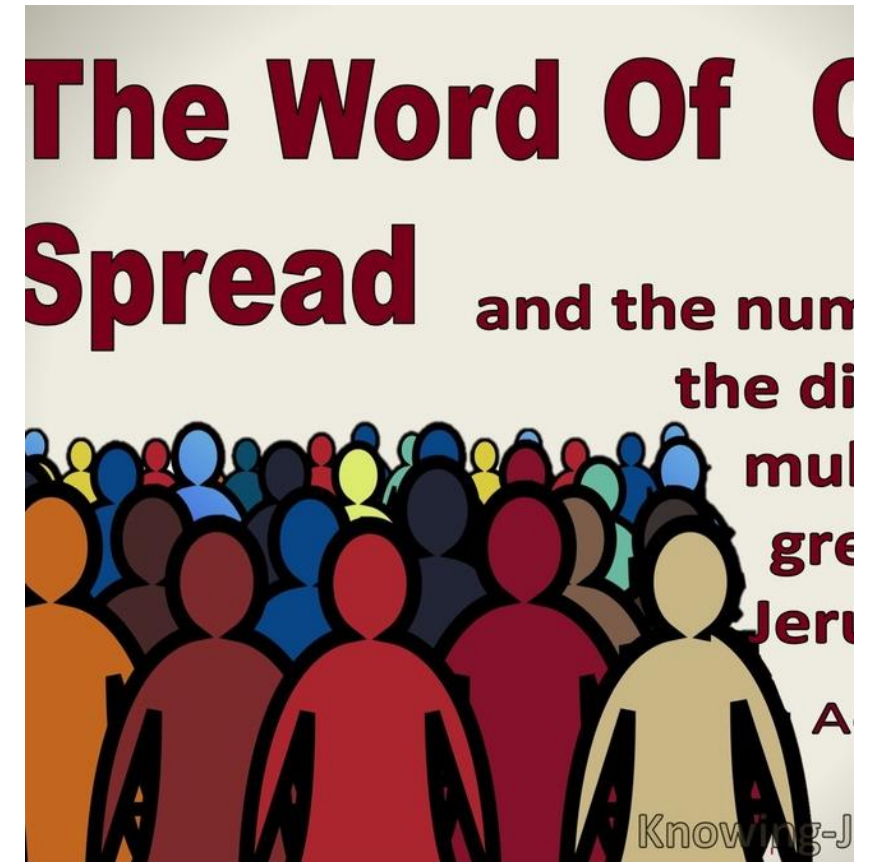
Result!

- The result of spirit led decisions leads to expansion and growth!
- The Word of God continued to spread, and the number of disciples increased significantly.
- This growth included many priests, indicating that the Gospel was even reaching those previously entrenched in the old religious system.



The Word Spread...

- *7 Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith. Acts 6:7*
- This scripture is a very prophetic picture of what the 21st Century Church should become.
- An emphasis on Scripture and the Gospel
- A focus on Discipleship
- Spirit filled Leadership is key to church growth.



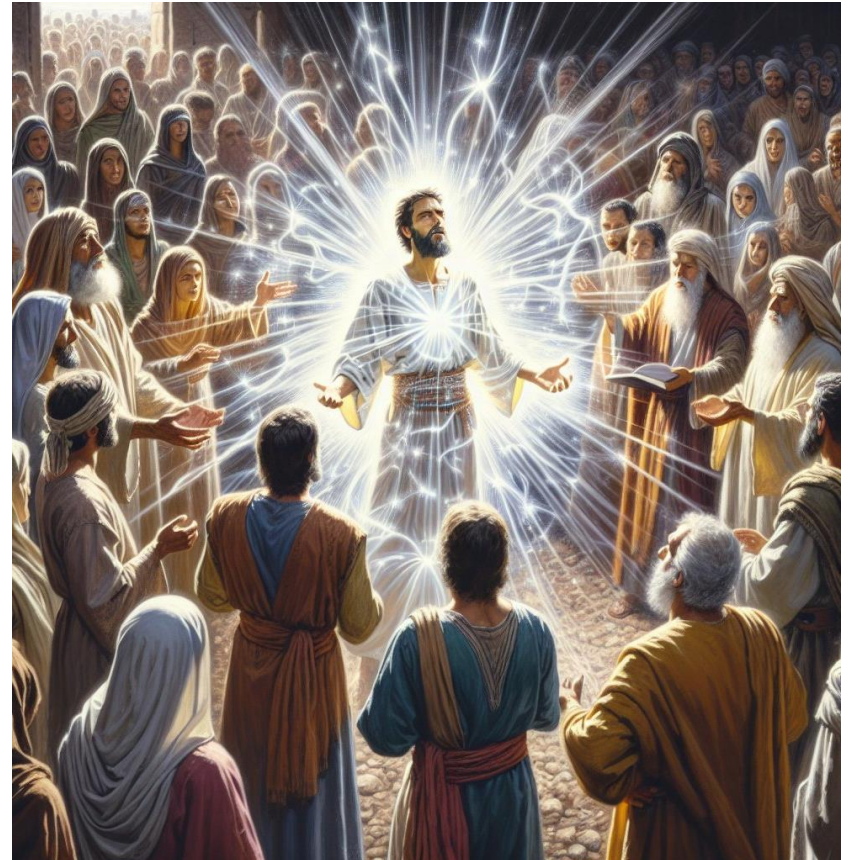
Stephen...

- *⁸ And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.*
- *⁹ Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen.*
- *¹⁰ And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke*
Acts 6:8-10



Stephen...

- The model of Stephen should be upheld across all Churches.
- That you can be a servant in the Church but ANOINTED!
- That you are not Clergy yet the Spirit upon you is the same as those in the pulpit.
- That the Spirit of God does not discriminate whom His hand is upon.
- That believers everywhere can see the Spirit do signs and wonders through them too!!



You are a MINISTER!!

- *18 But all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ [making us acceptable to Him] and gave us the ministry of reconciliation [so that by our example we might bring others to Him], 2 Corinthians 5:18.*
- One of the most liberating revelations from the Scriptures as opposed to some prevailing church traditions, is the fact that
- every Christian is a MINISTER and that they have a ministry from God.
- The priesthood of all believers is a cornerstone of The New Testament In Christ Realities that will be revived in the Last Days Church of Christ.
- We encourage every Christian to Arise and Shine their light for God and Kingdom.



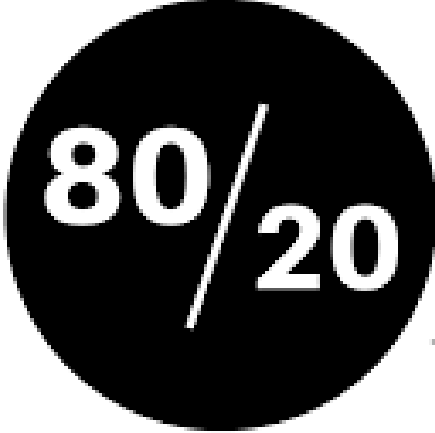
GO...!

- *19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations....Matthew 28:19,20.*
- The Great Commission is not directed at Pastors or Church Leaders but at every Believer wherever they live, work or have relationships.
- The 20/80 Pareto Law applies to the church where the minority are doing the job of the majority.
- We educate, teach and reveal that the Scriptures show clearly that every Christian has the Spirit of Christ and called to shine for the Kingdom everywhere.



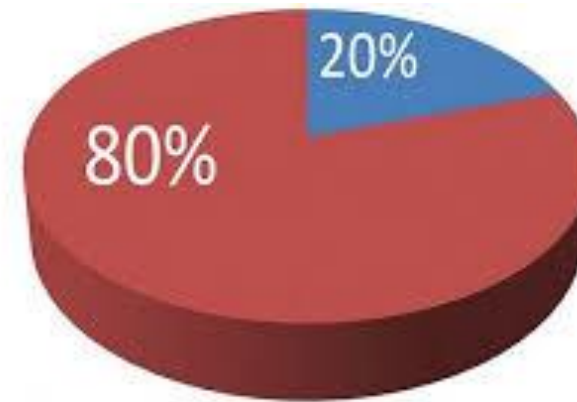
The Sleeping Giant..

- It is generally agreed across board in the church today that 80% or more of Church ministry work is carried out by 20% of the work force of volunteers and paid staff.
- Which implies that 80% of Believers in the church today are REDUNDANT!
- One way this can be remedied or corrected towards a more balanced or healthy state
- is to apply the truth we have been learning about Ministry to this challenging situation.
- Only 20% of church membership are called to Temple Ministry
- Over 80% of church members are called to THE WORLD not to Church

The  **Rule**

Rise Up!!

- 80% of Church members are MINISTERS
- This large work force should be released and commissioned to Minister to the World
- 80% of Your Ministry time should be spent outside church services
- Most Christians are spending 80% of their ministry time in the church sphere which should only take up 20%
- If this redundant 80% of Christians can be commissioned and released, they could become the 20% of activists in the world that get 80% of the required work done.
- 80% of your MINISTRY sphere is in the world (roughly as a guide only)
- 20% of your Ministry placement is in the church (except for 5 fold ministries & paid staff)



Everyone...

- *18 But all these things are from God, who reconciled **us** to Himself through Christ*

*[making **us** acceptable to Him] and gave **us** the ministry of reconciliation*

*[so that by our example **we** might bring others to Him],*

2 Corinthians 5:18.



Memory Verse

- *Then the word of God spread,*
- *and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem,*
- *and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.*
Acts 6:7

