

The Significance of the Laying on of Hands in Act6:6: Towards Theological Enlightenment

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ABSTRACT

The laying on of hands is a ritual gesture present in both the Old and New Testaments, with variations in the use of one or two hands, depending on the context. In the Old Testament, it was used in various sacrifices and consecrations, while in the New Testament, it was associated with blessings, healings, and the reception of the Holy Spirit. This act held symbolic significance, representing the transfer of spiritual blessing or authority. Scholars debate its meaning, particularly in Acts 6:6, where some believe it denotes ordination, while others argue it refers to commissioning individuals for service, such as deacons. The use of hands in biblical imagery, symbolizes the will and authority of the person, further emphasizing its significance. This research seeks to clarify the meaning of the laying on of hands in Acts 6:1-6, focusing on its biblical, theological, and ministerial implications. The study will examine both Old and New Testament contexts to provide a comprehensive understanding of the practice and its role in church leadership. Through historical grammatical analysis, this article aims to offer insights into how the rite can be integrated into contemporary Christian practices.

Keywords: Laying on of Hands, Ordination, Commission, and Theological.

INTRODUCTION

The laying on of hands is a ritual gesture shown in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The priest in the Old Testament ritual uses one or two hands (Hamilton, 2000). He said in Lev 16:21, the priest used both hands on the scapegoat's head. In Lev 24:14 and Deut. 13:9 all the people lay their hands, and Num. 27:18, 23; Deut. 34:9 Moses lay his hands on Joshua. One-handed ritual is mentioned in Lev 1:4; 3:2, 8, 13 (p. 796).

Several proposals are also associated with the laying on of hands in the New Testament. In Mk. 10:16, Jesus blesses the children, and in Luke 4:40, Jesus heals the people. In Acts 28:8, the apostle heals the man. Acts 13:3 is about commissioning, and Acts 8:17 is related to the reception of the Holy Spirit.

According to Aune (1988), the laying on of hands in both the Old and New Testaments is associated with various occasions. Based on this, there are different proposals regarding the laying on of hands in Acts 6:6. Some argue that it was an act of ordination (pp. 1317-1318), while others like Lenski (1961) claim that the seven men were appointed only as deacons to care for the poor and needy (p. 247).

In these paragraphs, the laying on of hands in the Old and New Testaments is discussed in relation to the appointment of the seven men in Acts 6:6. Aune (1988) proposes several occasions in which the laying on of hands occurs, and some argue that it is related to ordination. However, Lenski (1961) argues that the seven men received only the office of deacons and their duty was to care for the poor. Ryken (2000) argues that the hand, in biblical imagery, is a pervasive picture

that reflects the wishes and will of the entire person, whether in performing tasks, expressing power and authority, or designating purpose and function.

By these several arguments, the author will discuss the meaning and significance of the phrase “laying on of hands” in Acts 6:1-6. The practice of laying on of hands in the church is common. But the question is why people lay hands on others and what it means when they do? This paper clarifies and finds out the understanding of the laying on of hands role in Acts 6:6. This paper should develop the information of the laying on of hands in Acts 6:1-6.

The purpose of this research is to determine the understanding of the laying on of hands in Acts 6:6. To achieve this purpose, the study of the meaning of the Phrase laying on of hands should be done in the broad context of the Old Testament and in the New Testament context.

The significance of this research is to clearly understand the context of the biblical laying on of hands in the era of the Old Testament and New Testament. The variety of theologies on the subject of the laying on of hands has increased in Christianity trying to understand the meaning of the laying on of hands. In order to provide a more precise and coherent picture of the biblical laying on of hands, this research pursues to clarify the laying on of hands and its significance in the service of the church. It will contribute to a better understanding of the expression of the laying on of hands.

This research methodology follows the Hermeneutics tool of the Historical Grammatical Method.

THE HISTORICAL–RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

The Laying on of Hands in the Old Testament

Laying on hands in the Old Testament is a symbolic ceremonial act used to invoke a divine blessing, establish a connection for sacrifice, dedication, or impart spiritual gifts. David (1988) argued, “Phrase used in the Bible to describe a gesture or a ceremonial act. Central to both uses is the notion of power. The hand, particularly the right hand, was often a symbol for power in Bible times (see Ex 15:6; Ps 17:7; 20:6; 44:3).” (p. 1317)

Sacrifice

In the Old Testament, sacrifices were primarily used to lay on of hands in the OT. Brand and Draper (2003) say in Lev. 16 the Lord instructed Moses and Aaron concerning the Day of Atonement. At a particular point, Aaron was told to place his hands upon a live goat and “confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat’s head” (Lev. 16:21), transferring the sins of Israel to the goat (p. 1020).

Dedication

In the time of Aaron Aune (1988) argued, when Aaron and his sons were dedicated to the priesthood, and each was required to place his hands on the heads of sacrificial animals, thereby transferring his uncleanness to them (Ex 29:10, 15, 19). A more elaborate instance of such a ceremonial laying on of hands was when the people of Israel (undoubtedly represented by elders) laid hands on the Levites, who in turn laid their hands on bulls awaiting sacrifice (Nm 8:10, 12) (p. 1317).

Blessing

Laying on of hand is related to the blessing. Elwell and Beitzel (1988) say when Israel blessed his two grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, the aged patriarch placed his right hand on the younger brother, Ephraim, and his left on Manasseh. The greater power of the right hand may be seen when Joseph asks his father to change hands. Israel refused because he knew Ephraim would become the greater tribe (Gn 48:19) (p. 1317).

Judgment

Myers (1987) agrees with Elwell and Beitzel that laying on of hands is related to blessing, but he added judgment. He argued, “Heb. *šīt* is also used in instances where God’s hand is said to lay upon someone for blessing or judgment (Ps. 139:5) and in an apparent reference to a procedure followed in arbitration (Job 9:33). Where hands are laid on another for destruction the verb is *šālah* (e.g., Gen. 22:12; Exod. 24:11) or *nātan* (e.g., 7:4).” (pp. 646-647)

To Commission People for Important Service

Moses commissioned his successor, Joshua, through a public ritual of the laying on of hands (Nm 27:18–23). Brand and friends (2003) said, “Laying on of hands was used to set one apart for a special office. Moses laid his hands on Joshua to identify him as Moses’ successor and of Moses imparting his authority to Joshua (Num. 27:18–23).”

The Laying on of Hands in the New Testament

The ritual of laying on of hands in the Old Testament was recovered in the New Testament. In the New Testament, laying on hands is common practice in several settings, and some scholars argue this practice.

Bestow of Blessing

Bestow of Blessing is one of practice that happen in the New Testament. Aune (1988) says that the laying on of hands symbolizes the bestowed of blessing. Jesus had been laying on hands to the children to bless them in Matt. 19:15.

The practice of bestowing blessings through the laying on of hands is seen in the New Testament, as noted by Aune (1988). In Matt. 19:15, Jesus laid his hands on children brought to him for a blessing and prayer, as interpreted by Matthew. According to Luz and Koester (2001), the term "*παιδιά*" used in this context refers to small children under seven years of age. While it is uncertain whether the custom of scribes blessing children existed during the New Testament period, Morris (1992) suggests that Jesus likely prayed for the children as he had been asked to bless and pray for them.

To Symbolize the Bestowal of the Holy Spirit

Laying on of hands is to Symbolize the Bestowal of the Holy Spirit. Aune (1988) argued when the Samaritans accepted the gospel, the Spirit did not immediately fall on them. Peter and John laid their hands on the believers, and then they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17). Yet at other times, the Spirit came upon believers spontaneously (Acts 2:4; 10:44) or at baptism, a rite with which the laying on of hands was often associated.

To Heal

Healing is part of the ministry of Jesus and his disciples. Elwell and Beitzel (1988) says, laying on of hands was not associated with healing in the Old Testament or rabbinic tradition. Jesus laid hands on those who were sick while he spoke a word of command to deliver the demon-possessed (Mk 1:31, 41; 5:41; 7:33, 34; 8:23, 25; 9:27). In continuity with Jesus, the early church often used the laying on of hands to effect healing (Acts 9:17; 28:8).

To commission

The ritual of laying on of hands in the Old Testament was recovered in the New Testament. According to Elwell and Beitzel (1988), the early church revived the Old Testament ritual of the laying on of hands during significant events, such as the commissioning of the seven deacons by the apostles in Acts 6:6 and the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas for their mission to Asia Minor by the prophets and teachers in Antioch in Acts 13:3. The laying on of hands was not only a formal ordination to the Christian ministry (as indicated in 1 Timothy 4:14, 5:22, and 2 Timothy 1:6), but also a recognition of a person's spiritual gifts. This practice served as a way of acknowledging and empowering individuals for their roles in the ministry, demonstrating the importance of spiritual authority and community support in the early Christian church.

The revival of the laying on of hands ritual in the early Christian church underscores the importance of community support and recognition in the work of ministry, as well as the role of spiritual gifts in Christian service. It provides insight into the early Christian church's emphasis on spiritual authority, community, and individual giftedness, and it offers guidance for contemporary Christian communities seeking to cultivate and empower their members for ministry.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF ACTS 6:1-6

The book of Acts has been widely regarded as the primary historical account of the early Christian church. Scholars generally agree that Acts was written by the same author as the Gospel of Luke, and that it was intended to be a continuation of Luke's account of Jesus' life and ministry. In fact, Acts begins with a reference to Luke's earlier work, stating that it was written "concerning all that Jesus began to do and teach" (Acts 1:1).

Luke's purpose in writing the book of Acts is not just to present a historical account of the early church but also to emphasize the continuation of God's plan of salvation through the Holy Spirit. Luke's writings show the work of the Holy Spirit, which is evident in the lives of the apostles and early Christians. Luke highlights the importance of the Holy Spirit in guiding and empowering the early church as it grew and expanded beyond the borders of Jerusalem. Thus, Luke's purpose in writing the book of Acts was not only to provide an accurate and orderly account of the origins of Christianity but also to emphasize the ongoing work of God through the Holy Spirit.

ANALYSIS OF ACT 6:3-6

This section of the thesis focuses on a detailed examination of Acts 6:1-6 through an exegetical analysis. The chapter is divided into four main sections, including a discussion of the text itself, a translation of the passage, a literary analysis, a phrase analysis, and a summary. By breaking down the passage into these components and analyzing each one in detail, the author aims to provide a deeper understanding of the meaning and significance of the text. This exegetical analysis may shed light on the historical and cultural context of the passage and may also provide insights into its theological and practical implications.

Text and translation

Acts 6:1-6

^{6,3} ἐπισκέψασθε δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἄνδρας ἐξ ὑμῶν μαρτυρουμένους ἐπτὰ πλήρεις πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας, οὓς καταστήσομεν ἐπὶ τῆς χρείας ταύτης· ⁴ ἡμεῖς δὲ τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ διακονίᾳ τοῦ λόγου προσκατεργήσομεν. ⁵ καὶ ἤρεσεν ὁ λόγος ἐνώπιον παντὸς τοῦ πλήθους, καὶ ἐξελέξαντο Στέφανον, ἄνδρα πλήρης πίστεως καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου, καὶ Φίλιππον καὶ Πρόχορον καὶ Νικάνορα καὶ Τίμωνα καὶ Παρμενᾶν καὶ Νικόλαον προσήλυτον Ἀντιοχέα, ⁶ οὓς ἔστησαν ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀποστόλων, καὶ προσευξάμενοι ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῖς τὰς χεῖρας. (SBL Edition)

The translation:

³ Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. ⁴ But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. ⁵ And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: ⁶ Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them. (KJV).

Literary Analysis

This section discusses the structure of the Book of Acts, which is the second part of Luke's two-volume work. The author notes that the literary qualities of the text will be analyzed in the following subsections, which include literary type and literary structure.

In terms of literary structure, the Book of Acts can be divided into several sections or "books," each with its own themes and focus. For example, the first part of the book (chapters 1-12) focuses primarily on the ministry of Peter and the early Jerusalem church, while the second part (chapters 13-28) focuses more on the missionary journeys of Paul. Some scholars have also noted a chiasmic structure to the book, in which certain themes and motifs are repeated in a symmetrical pattern throughout the text. Understanding the literary structure of the Book of Acts can help readers to better appreciate its narrative and theological significance.

Literary Type or Genre

According to Kistemaker and Hendriksen (2001), the genre of the passage in question is history. They note that Luke has a unique approach to writing the history of the church, gathering individual snapshots like an album and providing a running commentary to explain them. This style is evident in the introduction to this passage, where Luke establishes the context by discussing what Jesus taught and did (1:1) and the promise of the Holy Spirit to give power to the disciples (1:8).

In terms of literary structure, this chapter provides an exegetical analysis of Acts 6:1-6 in four sections: the text, the translation, the literary analysis, phrase analysis, and the summary. The literary analysis focuses on the genre and structure of the passage, examining elements such as narrative, dialogue, and characterization. The phrase analysis examines individual words and phrases in the passage, seeking to understand their meaning and significance in the context of the larger narrative.

The Literary Structure

The division of the book of Acts into two major sections is a widely accepted scholarly view. As Conzelmann, Epp, and Matthews (1987) note, the book of Acts is structured in such a way as to portray the two epochs into which the history of the church is divided. The first epoch covers the time of the earliest church, while the second epoch covers the time of Paul's mission to the world. According to these scholars, the latter epoch forms a bridge to the present.

While the structure of the book of Acts provides insight into the history of the early church, it also has limitations. As Conzelmann and colleagues (1987) note, the linear movement from Jews through the Samaritans to the Gentiles is a way for the author to indicate divine guidance over this history. However, this also implies a certain level of schematizing and the exclusion of historical materials that would be invaluable to us today. Thus, while the structure of the book of Acts is useful in understanding the history of the early church, it must be considered alongside other historical sources and scholarly perspectives.

Style of the Language

Luke's skill as a writer and the quality of his Greek have been a topic of discussion among scholars. According to Kistemaker and Hendriksen (2001), Luke's writing style is highly regarded and considered to be on par with other Greek authors of his time. The authors note that Luke's writing is characterized by its style, word choice, grammar, and vocabulary, which place him in between writers of Koine Greek and those of the classical period. Furthermore, Luke's work includes numerous instances of the genitive absolute construction, as well as Aramaisms, which are features that attest to the author's command of Greek.

Overall, scholars agree that Luke was a skilled writer and that his work displays a high level of proficiency in Greek. While there may be differences in opinion about the consistency of his Greek throughout the book, it is clear that his writing style is highly regarded and has been the subject of much study and admiration.

Verse-by-Verse Analysis of Acts 6:3-6

In the present section, we intend to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the syntactical structures and the usage of significant terminology within each verse. This type of analysis, known as verse-by-verse analysis, is crucial in building upon the findings of previous research. Through the careful examination of each verse, we can gain a deeper understanding of the author's intended meaning and the underlying patterns in the text.

By focusing on the syntax and terminology of each verse, we can identify the author's stylistic choices and examine how they contribute to the overall narrative structure. Such a detailed analysis is essential in providing a comprehensive understanding of the text and is commonly used in scholarly research to identify nuances and insights that might be missed in a more cursory reading.

Acts 6:3

³ ἐπισκέψασθε δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἄνδρας ἐξ ὑμῶν μαρτυρουμένους ἑπτὰ πλήρεις πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας, οὓς καταστήσομεν ἐπὶ τῆς χρείας ταύτης· ἐπισκέψασθε δέ. Barret (2004) argued the Western text characteristically enlivens the opening, substituting for the first six words of the text, τί οὖν ἐστίν, ἀδελφοί; ἐπισκέψασθε ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν ἄνδρας. There is no difference in meaning.

The primary duties of the Seven were to take charge of the poor and the temporal affairs of the church. However, Lange et al. (2008) note that the Seven were not to be excluded from all participation in the spiritual labors of the apostles. The apostles desired to be in a position that would allow them to fulfill their official duties with complete freedom and dedicate themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. However, they did not intend to completely free themselves from the care of temporal affairs. The Seven were to assist in this regard, while also serving the spiritual needs of the church.

In summary, the selection of the Seven was an important decision for the early church, as the chosen individuals would not only be responsible for administering the property and temporal affairs of the church but also for attending to the spiritual needs of the poor and promoting the spiritual interests of the church. The apostles' desire to devote themselves entirely to prayer and ministry did not absolve them of their responsibility to attend to temporal affairs, which the Seven were to assist in. Beyer (1964) notes that service is a gift, and the Seven were chosen from among the faithful people, as they were expected to be men of impeccable character, full of the Holy Spirit, and competent administrators capable of handling delicate situations. Bruce (1988) argues that these qualifications were ideal requirements for all church gatherings. Overall, the selection of the Seven was a significant step in ensuring that the needs of the church were met, both materially and spiritually.

Acts 6:4

⁴ ἡμεῖς δὲ τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ διακονίᾳ τοῦ λόγου προσκατερήσομεν.

We will give ourselves continually (προσκατερήσομεν)

But we. In marked contrast with the seven.

Give ourselves continually. According to Nichol (1980), the phrase "give ourselves continually" can also be translated as "persevere." This word is used in various instances to describe the persistent behavior of the early Christians, as seen in Acts 1:14, 2:42, and 2:46.

According to Nichol (1980), there was to be a clear division of labor between the Twelve and the Seven in Acts 6:2-4. While the Seven took care of charity work, the Twelve were to attend to prayer and the ministry of the word. Nichol (1980) suggests that prayer included public worship as well as private devotion, and that the Seven were to minister material blessings while the Twelve were to be left free to minister spiritual benefits derived from the Word of God through preaching and teaching.

Lensky (1993) note that after this arrangement was made, the apostles expected to devote all their time to what properly constitutes their divine office, which they briefly summarized as "the worship and the ministrations of the Word." The term "προσευχή" is frequently used in this wider sense of worship, of which prayer is a prominent part. The newly created office, like everything else belonging to the life and activity of the congregation, would be under the guidance and leadership of the apostles and their divine office.

The verse examined in this study provide insight into the roles and responsibilities of the early Christians, specifically the Twelve and the Seven, in Acts 6:2-4. The phrase "give ourselves continually" in Acts 1:14 can also be translated as "persevere," which reflects the persistent

behavior of the early Christians. The emphasis in the Greek sentence structure is on the phrase "we ourselves," and the phrase "give...full time to" should not be understood as indicating that prayer and preaching were the only activities of the apostles. Rather, it was their main work, which included public worship and private devotion, and preaching the word of God.

There was a clear division of labor between the Twelve and the Seven, with the Seven taking care of charity work and the Twelve attending to prayer and the ministry of the word. The ministry of the Twelve was to be focused on administering the spiritual benefits derived from the Word of God through preaching and teaching. The apostles expected to devote all their time to what constituted their divine office, "the worship and the ministration of the Word," which included prayer as a prominent part.

Overall, this verse highlight the importance of devotion and persistence in the work of the early Christians, as well as the specific roles and responsibilities of the Twelve and the Seven in Acts 6:2-4. The study provides valuable insights into the early Christian community and their practices, which can inform modern-day Christian practices and understanding.

Acts 6:5

καὶ ἤρεσεν ὁ λόγος ἐνώπιον παντὸς τοῦ πλήθους, καὶ ἐξελέξαντο Στέφανον, ἄνδρα πλήρης πίστεως καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου, καὶ Φίλιππον καὶ Πρόχορον καὶ Νικάνορα καὶ Τίμωνα καὶ Παρμενᾶν καὶ Νικόλαον προσήλυτον Ἀντιοχεῖα,

The early community chose seven men among them: Stephen, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus (6:5). Barret (2004) said that, "All the seven bear Greek names; this does not prove that all were Hellenists (v. 1) since Greek names are found among the Twelve (Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew; 1:13) and were current, as was the Greek language, in Palestine, but it is at least consistent with this possibility (p. 314)."

Polhill (2001) explained that as the leaders of the community, the apostles proposed that the members choose seven men from among them to administer the charity to the Hellenist widows. The context suggests that the seven men were to be Hellenists, as the system had broken down with their group, and they would know better who the needy widows were and be better able to communicate with them. However, the apostles established some basic qualifications which the seven had to meet. First, they were to be "full of the Spirit," indicating that they had demonstrated a special degree of allowing the Spirit to work in them. Then they were to be known for their "wisdom," probably referring to the practical know-how necessary for the proper management of the charitable funds. One would assume that the seven would take over the administration of the charity among the Hellenist Christians, and the apostles would continue to do so among the others.

The apostles established qualifications for the seven, including being "full of the Spirit" and possessing practical wisdom for managing charitable funds. It is assumed that the seven would take over the administration of charity among the Hellenist Christians, while the apostles would continue to do so among others. These events show the early community's commitment to caring for the needs of its members, and how the Holy Spirit worked through the selection of these seven leaders to fulfill this task.

Acts 6:6

οὓς ἔστησαν ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀποστόλων, καὶ προσευξάμενοι ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῖς τὰς χεῖρας.

They set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them (6:6). Barret (2004) argued, “The grammatical of the sentence according to Barret in this verse is, “The subject of ἔστησαν is τὸ πλῆθος (v. 5; as a noun of multitude this word has already taken the 3 p. pl. verb ἐξελέξαντο). The word πλῆθος must still be the subject of προσευξάμενοι ἐπέθηκαν, that is, the whole company of believers, not the apostles alone, laid their hands on the seven men (p. 315).”

In conclusion, the commissioning of the Seven to handle the distribution of charity were done by the Twelve and the multitude after praying and laying hands on them. The act of prayer is a continuation of the practice seen in the selection of Matthias. The laying on of hands is a practice with diverse meanings in the New Testament and is used to denote installation into a role or office.

The grace freely given to those installed is believed to assist them in carrying out their ecclesial function. However, some translations in the Bible do not follow the correct grammatical and syntactical analysis, resulting in a deviation from the intended meaning. It is crucial to ensure accurate translation to understand the author's intended meaning fully.

THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATION

The theological implication that can be learned from Acts 6:1-6 is that God is with His people. And this is stated by helping His people find the right people to help the apostles deal with problems in the early church. Problem solving in the early church because they followed the instructions of the apostles and after that they prayed together while laying on of hands over the seven chosen people.

The laying on of hands has been traditionally viewed as a ritual that conveys special powers or abilities to the recipient. However, according to Underwood, Nickelson, and Underwood (2005), the act of laying on of hands is not a magical or superstitious rite that gives a person special power. Rather, it expresses the idea of being set apart by God's people for a special task.

Moreover, the laying on of hands is a way of designating a person for an office or particular duties within the church. This designation is not to be done hastily or suddenly, as ordination is based on a person's demonstrated spiritual growth (1 Timothy 3:6) (Underwood et al., 2005). In Acts 6:6 and 13:3, the laying on of hands was used to set apart individuals for specific duties within the church.

In conclusion, the laying on of hands is a universal practice that transcends cultural and religious boundaries, and its meaning and significance may vary across contexts. To appreciate its role fully, one must understand its cultural dimension and engage with diverse communities respectfully. The laying on of hands is an excellent example of the power of human connection and physical touch in spiritual practices, which is crucial for effective communication and engagement across diverse cultures and religions.

CONCLUSION

The church's expansion has far-reaching implications. New issues would arise as a result of such a growth. Care for the necessities of the apostolic family with the money in Judas' purse

had been easy. Caring for the Pentecostal church's first members was more difficult but not impossible. The number of Christians, however, had grown to the point that the apostles could no longer focus on other, more important tasks since they were all consumed with helping the poor.

This tension arose as daily allocations were made to the congregation's poorer Christians in Jerusalem. The presence of a common pool of money or resources, which wealthier Christian members had begun by contributing their estates, appears to have made the allotments possible. The sin and subsequent death of Ananias and Sapphira mentioned in Acts 5:1-11 could be related to this pool of resources.

The twelve apostles gathered the entire church and stated that the responsibility for the care of the poor had become so burdensome that they were devoting the majority of their time to this material ministry while neglecting the ministry of the Word. Such carelessness was unacceptable. The people agreed to the proposal and chose seven men in whom they had complete faith, based on how these candidates had previously conducted themselves.

Laying on of hands in this passage is not point to ordination that the church is practicing today. The laying on of hands is related with the commissioning to their ministry.

The book of Acts offers valuable insights into the development of leadership and community within the early Christian church. The passages discussed in this context demonstrate the importance of preserving traditional practices while remaining open to change and adaptation as the needs of the community evolve. The notion of leadership arising from functional needs within the church, rather than from divine decree, challenges some traditional views of ordination and clerical hierarchy.

As the church continues to navigate debates over ordination and leadership, it is important to remain faithful to the Gospel message while also remaining open to new ways of serving the community. The example of the early church, as described in Acts, offers a model for leadership and community-building that can inform the church's efforts today.

In the New Testament, the laying on of hands is frequently associated with the apostles and larger church community. They would use this practice to confer spiritual gifts and ordain people for ministry. For instance, in Acts 6:6, the apostles and community laid their hands on seven men to commission them for service. In another example from Acts 8:14-17, Peter and John laid hands on believers in Samaria so that they would receive the Holy Spirit.

The laying on of hands can vary depending on the context in which it is practiced. It is performed by various individuals authorized by God and the church community, such as priests, elders, those in positions of authority, and the multitude in the church who have been called and ordained by God. Ultimately, the laying on of hands is a symbolic and practical practice that has both Old and New Testament origins and is associated with a range of practices, including blessing, sacrifice, commissioning, and healing.

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