



281.890.1900  
TheMETonline.org

*Jones Road Campus*  
13000 Jones Road | Houston, TX 77070

*Fry Road Campus* | Hopper Middle School  
7811 Fry Road | Houston, TX 77433

A little bit later on in our service we are going to be ordaining some deacons. But before we go any further, let me welcome you to The MET on Fry Road, The MET on Jones Road, and those of you that are joining us via the World Wide Web. You're welcome to be here with us and we pray that what you hear today will change your life.

We're going to be talking about today something that's very, very important to our church: service. Several years ago we all got together and said: Hey, let's come up with one overriding mission statement that would describe what our church is about. We came up with the following words: *We connect people each day to the real Jesus in a real way.* We want to be a real representation of who Jesus Christ is in our daily lives. We want to be able to connect the people around us—whether they be believers or unbelievers—to the real Jesus that we know. And so:

- That might mean (that) evangelism
- That might mean discipleship
- That might be going around the world
- It may mean going across the street or going into the next room

But it's our mission as a church to connect people each day to the real Jesus in a real way.

If you look in the book of *Acts*, that's what the church did. The book of *Acts* is like a history book of the church. It is what happened after Jesus ascended into Heaven and the Holy Spirit came, and what the Holy Spirit of God did through people to bring them inside of the church. [In] *Acts, chapter 6*, we see the first deacons that are selected. Deacons—literally means servant—are selected from among a body of people to be able to minister to the people.

Now when we say: *We connect people each day to the real Jesus in a real way*, there are several ways we try to do that:

- 1) **Come to worship:** We want to bring our friends to worship; we want to come to worship.
- 2) **Belong.** Being a part of a *Small Group*. And if you're not a part of a *Small Group* on Sunday mornings or throughout the week you're not getting what you need from a church. I want to say that again. As much and as good as it is that you are here today to listen to such fine preaching (I might add), it is imperative that you belong to a *Small Group* of people -
  - Who are taking care of you
  - Who are ministering to you
  - Who are watching over you
  - Who are becoming your friends and making sure that you don't fall off the face of the earth once stuff happens to you

You are getting, at best, 60 to 70 percent of the benefit of a church when all you do is come and sit down. The rest, which is the best, comes when you are in with a *Small Group* of people studying the Bible and doing life together. Worship...belong...

- 3) **Serve.**
- 4) **Connect each day.**

We, while we are worshiping, we belong to a Small Group. We want to serve people. Your spiritual growth will be tied directly to the four things that I just mentioned. But if you're not serving lots of people aren't connecting and a lot of need has gone unmet. So I want to talk to you this morning briefly—before we ordain these men who will come before us—about serving.

Let's look in the book of *Acts*, *chapter 6*, the first seven verses. I want to walk us through these Scriptures, make some comments, and then we will ordain these men as they're introduced to us. *Chapter 6, verse 1 [NIV]*, "In those days when the number of disciples was increasing..." First of all notice this: the church is designed to grow. The church that doesn't grow, something is wrong.

Now three things happen in the book of *Acts* to show us how the enemy interrupts the growth of the church. The first thing that the enemy will do is persecute you, put you through a trial, make things difficult for you. So you lose your confidence in God and you no longer share your faith or you no longer come to church.

## **PERSECUTION INTERRUPTS CHURCH GROWTH**

Let me just encourage you, those of you that are here now, you need to hear this. There will come a time when you don't want to be here. When you don't want to be here is the time you need to be here. [On] the Sunday you want to cut out—the Sunday you think: My life is such a mess, I can't go to that place—please, in the name of Almighty God, come to church. The devil's trying to keep you away from something you need to hear. If you're a believer in Jesus Christ, listen to what the Bible says: Forsake not the assembling together of yourselves as this is the habit of some. [*Hebrews 10:25* (paraphrased)]

When you're in trouble you need the church more than when things are going great. The first thing Satan will do is he'll persecute you a little bit. Mentally, emotionally, or physically he will try to keep you from God's word and keep you from God's people. When you do that you no longer speak about the Lord Jesus.

The second thing that he'll do is just put sin in the church.

## **SIN INTERRUPTS CHURCH GROWTH**

Sin in the church—that's hard to believe—but it is in the church because there are—what?—sinners in the church. I'm talking about open, rebellious, non-repented of sin. That stops the functioning of the Spirit of God. Without the Spirit of God, the church cannot go forward. Without the Spirit of God and people confessing their sins with one another, the church will not—cannot—go forward because the Holy Spirit is just that: Holy. And no, we're not perfect and we're never going to be perfect. He wants us to be humble and contrite; confess our sin and then move on.

Satan will keep you [from church] by persecuting you. Sin will keep you away from God by keeping you in sin. Then the third thing that will happen is there will be derision—dissension—there'll be a problem that comes up.

## PROBLEMS INTERRUPT CHURCH GROWTH

Now, look in *verse 1* again. "Now in those days, when the number of disciples was {increasing}..." [*Acts 6:1 (NKJV)*] More people—you ready?—equals more problems.

I have never met—myself included—any person that came to church that didn't have issues. Why do we come to church? We've got a big issue: sin; which causes all these other little issues that we come dragging in with us when we come to church. To go to the church where there is no problem just—

- Go to the church where there is no preaching
- Go to the church where there is no people
- Go to the church where there is no action going forward
- Go to the church that doesn't believe the Bible

The church that believes the Bible is going to have a whole bunch of people with a whole bunch of problems in it.

Here is problem number one—man, the church isn't six chapters old (if you will) and problems are coming—here it is:

...the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

*Acts 6:1 (NIV)*

There was a revival going on. The church was exploding. Thousands—minimally at this point you have at least 30,000 if not more people—that are involved in the church that's six chapters old. And now some people aren't being taken care of. And so—a what arises?—a complaint.

You know when people say: You know, our church is so perfect we don't have any problems—you just aren't doing anything. The moment you start doing something and people start showing up, there are going to be folks complaining about something not going right for them.

Now, believe it or not complaints were around at the beginning of the church—right there. These Hebraic Jews are getting food for their widows, but the Grecian Jews—

- The ones that came from other than Jerusalem
- That had adopted as their culture the Greek culture
- But had kept as their religion Jewish faith

—they were kind of being looked down on. The homeboys were getting their food—I mean the home-girls were getting their food before the home-girls from the other place were getting their food. And so they complained.

If you weren't getting something from your church what would you do? Don't lie, you know you'd complain: This isn't being taken care of over here.

And so what do they do?—*verse 2*:

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.

*Acts 6:2 (NIV)*

So what did they do? They took the complaints and they went where? They went straight to the top where they thought they could get some answers for their complaints. They went to the preacher: You guys are the ones that started preaching and doing all this stuff and now we have a problem.

Listen, this is not the first problem in the Bible. I challenge you: read the *New Testament* somewhere—in some epistle or in some gospel. The epistles: that's about the church (by the way) they're not the apostles' wives (just in case you thought). An epistle is a letter written to a church. You go in there—in any epistle—and I dare you: find a church that there wasn't a problem in when Paul or when Peter were writing to these people. There is no such thing.

There's always going to be problems as long as there are people. And then when we get to Heaven, thank Almighty God:

- There is no more complaining
- There is no more whining
- There is no more bellyaching
- There's no somebody crying in the corner because they didn't get what they wanted

Thank God we will be perfect. But until that time there're going to be complaints. There are going to be problems.

And so the Twelve say: Okay, this is a problem—there is no doubt—but it's not good for us to neglect the ministry of the word in order to wait on tables. [*Acts 6:2* (paraphrased)] Here's what [they are] saying: I have an important role. You have an important role. My role is to preach the Bible.

When you come to this church on Sunday morning, what do you expect? Don't you expect that I'm going to open up this Book and you're going to open up your soul and God is going to feed your soul? There is no more important function in the spiritual growth of people's hearts than the preaching of the word of God.

When I came to this church almost 15 years ago and I met with the committee that was looking for a pastor and they peppered me with all kind of—[speaking to his wife: Do you remember that, Kristi?—we went over there in that room that the the air conditioner didn't even work in. I was sweating like a dog over there. They asked me all of those questions. At the end I said Here's what you need. Let me tell you what you need. Whether it's me or whether it's somebody else that you are going to choose, number one: you'd better make sure God's called them here. You'd better make sure that your hearts are right with God and that you're looking for the right thing. Because a guy can do a whole lot of things, but if he can't do this one thing, then he can't help you. And he's not going to be able, through the Spirit of God, to grow your church.

*Acts, chapter 20, verse 20*; here is what the Apostle Paul says:

You know that I have not hesitated to {What?—Organize around problems? Figure out everything that was wrong? Start a bunch of new stuff so you would quit complaining?—No!} preach anything that would be helpful [to you] but have taught you publicly and from house to house.

*Acts 20:20 (NIV)*

Let the preacher preach. That's why you have me here. You have me here to discern the mind of God, to mine out of this word—His inspired, infallible, inerrant word—truth that would allow you to be built up in Christ, to equip you to go out and minister in this church, and minister in the world.

Look what he says: It would not be good for us to wait on tables. [*Acts 6:2* (paraphrased)]

Let me ask you something. When you go to a restaurant do you demand that your waiter—look here, we have a problem—I want you to go to the kitchen and cook me the food? Hey listen, I don't know about you, but I don't want the waiter cooking the food. I don't want to grab the busboy and say: Hey busboy, I've got a problem. I'm real hungry, I want you to go in and fix the food. No!

- You don't want the cook bussing the table
- You don't want the cook washing the dishes
- You don't want the cook tending the bar
- You don't want the cook being the hostess

You want the cook to cook. Why?—because the cook cooks. That's what the cook does. If the cook is good at cooking you're going to be really good at eating. And at the end of that meal you're going to unbuckle those pants and say: Oh, man, that's the best food I've had cooked; my compliments to the chef—no!

Do you want me solving every problem or do you want me preaching the word of God? [A few in the congregation can be heard responding: Preaching.] Okay that's not a whole lot of votes—preaching the word of God. [Several in the congregation respond: Amen!] I surrendered to the ministry of Jesus Christ to preach the word, not wait on tables. Now there's nothing wrong with waiting on tables. You can make good money waiting on tables. You can help a lot of people waiting on tables. But only the cook can cook. That's the only thing the cook ought to be doing.

And so look: It's not good for us to leave the word of God—

<sup>2</sup> "...to neglect ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. <sup>3</sup> Brothers, {Listen!} choose seven men from among you...

*Acts 6:2-3 (NIV)*

So in other words get some guys that are among you—that know you—that can fix this problem. He said: Look, get seven men from among you and here's what are their qualifications— "who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom" and will take the preacher hunting and fishing—right there in the Bible; right there in the SIV, the Sal Interpreted Version.

It said: You know what you need to be if you're going to be a servant? Here is what you need: You need to be good.

## **A SERVANT NEEDS TO BE GOOD**

You need to be a good man. You need to be somebody that someone trusts. When they see you they see the life of Christ coming out of you. When they see you they know: that person is here for me. When they see you it's not an agenda that you have; you're not driving toward something. What you want to do is help them in this problem so that they can move on—so the church can move on and continue to grow both spiritually and numerically. It's somebody who loves the church and loves people more than they love themselves. They are good. They are godly.

## **A SERVANT NEEDS TO BE GODLY**

These are men who are filled with the Spirit of God. You cannot be filled with the Spirit of God and not be godly. These are men who don't do things out of their own ambition but what is best for the church. These are men who are humble and submissive to the will and the word of God. And then, not only are they godly, but they are gifted to serve.

## **A SERVANT NEEDS TO BE GIFTED**

Do you realize every one of us in this building is gifted to serve—everybody? Everybody that names the name of Jesus is gifted to serve.

Now listen to what it said in *1 Peter*, when Peter is talking to the church and he's talking about people serving, I want you to listen to what he says. He says:

<sup>8</sup> Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. {Don't invite someone to your house and complain that you've got to do it.} <sup>10</sup> Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve {Who?} others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

*1 Peter 4:8-10 (NIV)*

We all need the grace of God. Where does that grace come from? [Pointing out several individuals in the congregation:] From you...from you...from you...from you...from you...from you...from me—from every one of us who have been brought into Christ in whom the Spirit of God lives. We have a gift. Your gift is not my gift. I don't want your gift. Don't try to take my gift. I don't want your place. You don't need my place. We all need to be in the place that God has us. And when we are and we are ministering, guess what happens? The grace of God hovers and falls down on a place.

Are you serving? Are you somewhere and because you are there another person is there who would have never been before if you were not serving? By the way, 7 men—about 30,000 members—these men knew how to get it done.

[*Acts 6:4 (NIV)*]: “and will give our attention to prayer in the ministry of the word.”

Listen, I want to help you. Every pastor I know that has a heart for God wants to help his church. I can't help you in a lot of things. I can tell you (if I could focus my help for you) what I could do that you would be beating down the doors to get in here every Sunday morning to hear what God had to say, because I had the time—

- To get a hold of God's mind
- To pray what God wanted
- To understand what God wanted
- To devour the word
- To meditate and ruminate on it
- Then to regurgitate it into a form that would help you Monday through Saturday

That's the best I can do for you.

The best I can do for our church is:

- Pray
- (Is to) read the Word
- (Is to) live the Word
- (To) preach the Word of God

And as I am doing that, that is the life-blood of the church: prayer and the word of God.

I don't care, you can have everything else:

- Have an *Awana's Ministry*
- Have a *Student Ministry*
- Have a *Children's Ministry*
- Have all the ministries in the world that you want—men's, women's, teenagers', infants', unborn ministry—have them all

But if you don't have prayer and you don't have the word of God, you'll be doing a lot of good, but it won't be a lot of good for God.

Go to the church that doesn't pray, go to the church that doesn't preach the Word, and it will be [as] dead as four o'clock in a Methodist Church—sorry, those of you that are Methodist—nothing going on.

You know what? In January of next year (that's just a couple months away) we're going to gather together and we're going to have another prayer summit. We're going to stretch ourselves out before God. We're going to humble ourselves before God. We're going to cry out unto the Name of the Lord. Because every time, I read in Scriptures, God's people did it—vwoom!

- God fell on the place
- God stirred things up (and)
- God got things done

We need to pray as a church. We need to pray. We need to pray and we need to be preached to.

I had the most glorious week last week. Sunday morning, Sunday night, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., nothing but preaching, preaching, preaching, preaching. It was a Bible conference. I just came unglued. I just couldn't wait. Why? Because all I had to do was pray and preach—hang around with that crazy pastor I was with—but that was it. When I was there at night—Man!—we had God-ordained, Heaven-sent, beautiful time in the word of God before the Lord. I want that for our church. I'm not saying I have to preach three hours every week, but it probably wouldn't be bad every now and then.

<sup>4</sup> "and will give our attention to prayer in the ministry of the word."  
{Okay, ready? Here's the biggest miracle in the *New Testament*—} <sup>5</sup> This proposal pleased the whole group.

*Acts 6:4-5a (NIV)*

Never happened before; never happened again; everybody was happy. Man, if that ever happened I think I'd just die right there. There was a Sunday where everybody was happy? Everybody liked everything? Do you know what's going to happen when that day finally comes? A preacher is going to say, "Everybody was happy," [and] right when the words get out of his mouth the trumpet sounds, the rapture happens, and we're gone. It's just like God said: I just wanted to give you a taste of what it was going to be like, but I didn't want you to get used to it.

Everybody was happy. The program didn't please everybody. The proposal—here's what we're going to do:

- We're going to get some people together
- They're going to fix what's broke (but)
- We're not going to stop ministering to people (and)
- We're not going to stop preaching
- We're not going to stop worshipping
- We're not going to stop evangelizing

We're not going to get so much sideways energy that the main thing is no longer the main thing.

I'm going to tell you, the main thing at this church is: *To connect people each day to the real Jesus in a real way.* And anything that gets in front of that isn't from God. It's not from God. So what am I telling you?

- Let the cook cook
- Let the waiter wait
- Let the busboy bus
- Let the preacher preach
- Let the deacon serve (and)
- Let the member serve

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, {formerly of Metropolitan} a convert to Judaism.

*Acts 6:5 (NIV)*

Seven men, four of which we know nothing about. Why would God put four people in the Bible and name them on such a critical juncture in the life of the church where things could have gone really, really bad or things could have gone really, really good, which it did? Why did he put four no names? Because I'm going to tell you this: the majority of the work of God that goes on in the church goes on by unsung/unknown people every day—every day. You see people come up on the platform every now and then. You see folks with badges on and you get to know their name. But the majority of people that do the work of the ministry at this church are unsung and unknown and unheralded heroes of the Kingdom of God.

When you drop your child off, you don't know the people that are back there—

- When you take them to the *Student Ministry*
- When you drop them off in *Children's*
- When the air conditioning is turned on and the lights are on
- When things actually happen the way that they happen

The people that you don't see do enough so that what you do see ministers to you. Everybody is important in this church. There are no insignificant ministries around here. There are no insignificant people around here. I mean, just think about it, if we did—

This is why I love the fact of how you responded late last summer when we said we've got to have some help in *Children's [Ministry]*. We've got to have some help there. You responded—over 100 of you responded. In that short of time we doubled the amount of people who were ministering in *Children's*—in just that quick amount of time. Now when a child goes in there, there's a happy room filled with people and adults that are taking care of them. It's a rocking house over there now.

Now think for a moment if we didn't have people that you didn't know—that you see all the time but you don't know them—serving. How many of you came for the first time not too long ago? That's all right, we're going to give you a prize. When you drove on this campus, did you know where to go? No:

- Which campus?
- Which parking lot?
- Which building?

And if somebody wasn't there and saying: Hey come over there, park right here—as soon as we get this church member out of parking in the guest parking lot—come right over here. Oh hey, welcome. Do you know where the church is? The church is right there

[Visitors think:] I mean, there are so many buildings that I didn't know—

Come with me and I'll show you. Are these your children? Oh, how old? Oh, you have a 4-year-old and a 7-year-old and a 13-year-old. There're kind of my kid's age. Why don't you come with me? Right here we're going to register and get all of your kids in the computer and stuff so that we can print out a little badge for them. And when they run around you'll be able to find them. Why don't you come with me? Let's just drop off your 7-year-old first. Here's this door right here and let's walk in. And there [are] six kids in there and no adult!

Do you think for one moment that that adult is going to drop their child off in a room with other 7-year-olds when there is no adult in there? How important is that person in that room? So important that that adult that came with those three kids who have come because—

- [His] wife has left him (and)
- They don't know what to do (and)
- They desperately want to hear the word of God

Now is going to say: I'm sorry I can't leave my children there. Maybe we'll come back next week when they can have a teacher.

You know what happens in that person's life? Nothing! Now who is the most important person in that scenario? It's the person that needed to be in the room. What if they came, there wasn't anybody working out in the parking lot, [and] they didn't know where to go? They would spin around this parking lot and leave and go to some empty parking lot of a church where they probably have nothing going on, but at least they could park them. Everybody is important in this church. And if you are not serving, somebody is not being served—bottom line. From the parking lot to the pew everybody is important.

Now, are you ready? We're going to close with this: *verses 6 and 7*, then we're going to ordain some men.

<sup>6</sup> They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. {What would you expect then? The widows got fed—no, look:} <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.

*Acts 6:6-7 (NIV)*

You would've expected the story to close:

- And the widows were taken care of (and)
- They didn't complain anymore (and)
- There was unity in the Body (and)
- We all held hands and sang *Kumbayah* (and)
- It was really sweet (and)
- There was a great Spirit in the place

No! The church grew rapidly because where else in this world are you going to find people falling over one another to help each other? And to make sure their needs are met while somebody is preaching the word of God? And the Spirit of God is falling on the place and people are being saved? Nowhere but the church—nowhere are you ever going to get that but the church. The church grows when the church serves—period. (Because) I can be preaching but—

- If we can't get anybody parked (and)
- If we can't get anybody in their *Small Group* (and)
- [If] we can't get the lights on (and)
- If we can't get the air conditioning running
- If we can't take up the offering

If we can't serve, nobody is going to come. Because they're going to think that nobody really cares. Everybody is important in this place. If you've never served, we need you now more than ever.

This last Monday I came back from San Antonio, came back here because we had to tell some folks: At the beginning, in January 2010 those positions were no longer going to be here. Do you remember, I've been telling you for several months now—no fault of anybody, but—as the economy has affected you, it's affected giving here? We just can't keep going on. And the only other cuts we can make are going to have to be in personnel. So we had to tell some precious people: This job isn't going to be here in January.

So we're doing everything we can to help them. We're doing everything we can to encourage them. But still, telling somebody that job isn't going to be here is tough. Some of you have heard that. You've had to say it to people or someone has said it to you. I can't imagine what it would be like hearing that. I know what it's like having to say that—it's horrible.

Then I went back and I preached that night at this church in San Antonio. I (kind of) shared a little bit of what the day was like. I was feeling kind of down. I said: You just pray for those folks and pray for our church because we are many. We are many and we could be many, many more. Just pray that God would just speak to us through this.

The next night a young couple came up to me—they couldn't be early 20s max—and gave me an envelope and said: This is for two people. I had shared a story about just one of the people that will no longer have a job here come January because it just tears me up. I could tell ten stories like that. Then I told a little story about what we're doing over in Africa—about a particular orphan. And they gave me the envelope. I went to the hotel that night and afterwards I opened it up. It was two stacks of \$100 bills; one stack for the person who will no longer have a job here in January, and the other stack to feed orphans.

And I thought: God, You are so good. When we look at our church and we say: This is a bad thing. You [God] look at our church and say: No, this is a good thing. I am in control of my people and I put my people where I want them. I just allowed this to happen so your people would know I know where they are. I can take care of them from people whom they will never know. I can take care of My people.

Church, this is the time for us to step up to the plate and say: Count on me. Because we're no longer paying ten positions now to do what we've been doing. Now we have to volunteer. Now we have to have people serving in those areas or that ministry is going to go undone.

- We need your help
- We need you praying
- We need you sensitive
- We need you to be listening to God

And when I stand before you and I say: Church, this is what we need—this is something that we need to fix—and I need all hands on deck to help this one. That's strategic service. I don't care if you're gifted for it or not.

You know, they didn't do a gifts test when they said: We need to fix this problem. They [didn't] say: Oh wait I didn't know what my spiritual gift was (you know?); can I have a first-serve just in case I don't like it? No, we need you now—all hands on deck. Later on you'll figure it out and we'll put you in another place where you can be strategically important. (You know?) Look at the three lives of those guys that are mentioned right there up front. They all went off and did different ministries, but they had their start doing that ministry.

So, church, it's time to step up to the plate. The men that we are going to parade before you are candidates for deacons.

- They have been watched.
- They have been grilled.
- They have been drilled.
- But most of all we've seen their hearts (and)
- We've watched them already in the ministries that they're in

We are bringing them before you today because we are going to lay our hands on them. We are going to set them apart for one thing only: to be the marines that storm the beachheads of the greatest needs that we have in this church. They and their families will be—for you—the example of what it means to serve and to be a good, godly, gifted person in this church.

So I'm going to read to you out of *2 Timothy*. Then we are going to pray and these men are going to come out. They will be introduced to you and then we will pray over them. In *1 Timothy* (rather), *chapter 3, verse 8*:

<sup>8</sup> Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. <sup>9</sup> They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. <sup>10</sup> They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

*1 Timothy 3:8-10 (NIV)*

That's what we have done: we've tested them, we found nothing against them, and now we are ordaining them. We are saying: We are ordaining you. We are putting you in the place of a servant of this church.

<sup>11</sup> In the same way, their wives {whom you will see with them} are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. <sup>12</sup> A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. <sup>13</sup> Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

*1 Timothy 3:11-13 (NIV)*

These men have been looked at, they have been tested, and we have found them to be some of the best servants that we could bring before you to serve our church that we can. Let's pray together.

Lord Jesus, as we come to this time now where we are going to be ordaining these men, I ask that You would make it a memorable occasion for them. But this wouldn't be the moment that ends all for them; that this would be the moment that begins all for them. Lord, I pray that You would open their eyes to the needs that we have in our Body so that they might be able to do something about those needs. I pray You use them as an example in their *Small Groups*, in their community, and at their jobs. I thank You for them, Lord.

God, I pray also that You'd protect them and their families. They are entering the work of the ministry. And when they enter that, enter in Satan and his host of demons, all types of temptation and trial, [and] all types of things that will come against them. But, Lord, they will only come against them so that You can show your strength for them. I pray, God, that they would be strong in Your word. I pray that they would stand when they are supposed to stand, that they would love when they are suppose to love, that they would be faithful; that out of their mouth will never be uttered a negative word but everything that would be edifying and right and good and wholesome would come out of their mouths.

Fill their hearts, Lord, with the Holy Spirit. Bless their wives and their families. May they, during the days they have on this earth, serve well so that they may be rewarded well one day in Heaven...in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

George, why don't you come out and introduce these men? As they come out, they will be seated before you and we 'll lay hands on them and pray for them.

[George Richardson:] Good morning, church. I am George Richardson. I 'm a member of the *New Deacon Candidate Team* within the deacon body. Today before you at The MET—at the *Fry Road Campus* and here at Jones Road—we have a total of 18 men being presented for ordination. Three of these men joined The MET already ordained and you'll see them standing behind the deacons being ordained and their prayer partners. At our *Fry Road Campus*, we have four deacons that are being ordained and that service is immediately after our service. So if you are able to make it over there, it would be great to show our support for that campus and those deacons who will be serving that body. If you'll turn your attention over to this tunnel [at your right, my left] I will introduce the deacon candidates and their brides.

Roy and Lisa Brashier  
Mike and Sandra Gann  
Randy and April Canik  
Chad and Wendy Gamble  
Kyle and Bonnie Kem  
Christian and Tracy Miller  
Bud and Julie Landrum  
Johnnie and Allison Stein  
Haskel and Betty Polson  
Jeff and Tammy Westbrook

Mark and Debra Wilson  
Larry and Beth Lane  
Creech and Jan Newsome  
Richard and Earline Kimball

Prayer partners, if you'll enter. Where did Sal go—is he down front?

[Pastor Sal:] Right here. Church, we're going to pray for them. Let me ask you to do this: would you stand up? I want you to take your hand and just as symbolically the entire church ordaining, laying our hands on these folks and setting them aside for the work of service. [Addressing the deacon candidates:] You ought to be sweating every Sunday, guys, serving these people and falling over yourselves to figure out how to better love and take care of this group. So we're going to pray that that exactly happens. Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, as we come to You, we're grateful that You take care of Your Church. We thank You for these men that are before us standing with their wives. God, first of all, we pray that forever that would be the case, that they'd be standing next to these women and that You would secure their marriage and that You would protect their families as they serve You.

God I pray that they would always be humble in Your presence. I pray, God, that they would know that when we are little in our own eyes, we are great in Your eyes and we are greatly usable by You. I pray, Lord Jesus, that You would use them to bring a great deal of blessing to our church as we shepherd and nourish people, Lord. I pray, God, that they would have a shepherd's heart. I pray that they would have the heart of Jesus. I pray that they would be concerned by everybody that's put under their care.

God, I pray that You would pour out on them wisdom. I pray that You'd pour out on them holiness and I pray that You fill them with Your Spirit. That they become men that they would never have become before had they not taken this position; had You not called them. So, Lord, I pray that You would humbly keep them close to You; and kneeling at the cross knowing that everything good that is in their life is a result of knowing You—that we have nothing to boast about and nothing to lean on other than Jesus.

Dismiss from our minds all fleshly thoughts, all good intentions that do not come from You, Lord. Because we only want to serve You. And I pray, Lord, as we serve You, it would be shown by the way that we serve one another in this place.

God, I pray for them now in this moment as You have set them aside for Your service, that our church would be a better place; and we would grow, people would come to Jesus, and we would see a rapid movement of Your Spirit among us; because we are serious about following You and serving other people. We do this, Lord, because You've asked us to. We are following You because Your word says so. We are lifting up these men,

their wives, and their families to You to serve our church...in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Church, here's your new crop of deacons. You can be seated, Church.

Guys, we are going to take an offering, so if you wouldn't mind jumping down and grabbing the plates—get to work here. We are going to receive our morning offering. If you are our guest, please do not feel any pressure to give. If you are a church member, feel the pressure. This is your church; we employ people here, and we minister to thousands of people. And it doesn't happen without your giving. I am grateful to God for the way that you've been giving. Let's just pray that God would increase our numbers, that we would really connect with people each day, and that we would connect them to the real Jesus in a real way; and watch God pour His Spirit out on this place.

I just don't want to go to church; I want to go where God is. I want Him to use me and I want God to use you. The only way that happens is if we all join in together and we serve. That means we give our time, we give our talent, we give our treasure, and we give ourselves to God. So let's pray and ask God to bless this offering.

Father, thank You so much for all that You do for us. You do so, so much. I pray now that You would take this money that is going to be given and You'd put it on the critical path that we need. There are lots of people that need Jesus. There are folks that need to be fed. There's preaching that needs to be done. There's ministry and counseling and so many things that happen, that doesn't happen unless we have people here to be able to do that. So, Lord, I pray that You would take this offering, that You would bless it and You would use it for Your glory...in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Lead Pastor: Dr. Sal Sberna

**The MET**  
Metropolitan Baptist Church  
13000 Jones Rd  
Houston, TX 77070

*Sermon Transcript Ministry*  
resource@TheMETonline.org

**<sup>7</sup> Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, <sup>8</sup> because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does...**

*Ephesians 6:7-8*  
(*New International Version*)

**Legend:**

(**words in parentheses**) = spoken by the preacher *but unnecessary* to the core sentence idea

[**words in square brackets**] = additional explanation for clarity *not spoken* by the preacher

{**words in curly brackets within indented quote**} = spoken explanation *not part of the quote*