

**NEHEMIAH**  
**CLOSE TO HOME**  
**week of September 12, 2021**  
**NEHEMIAH 3:1-16 (ESV)**



**big idea of the week:**

Leaders, if your discussion veers off the rails, you can try to steer the conversation back to this theme. We are one part of a work God is doing that involves His entire church.

**12 South Congregation**

**OPEN**

**welcome:** Connect and check in with everyone briefly before the study starts.

**opening prayer:** Feel free to ask someone to open with prayer, asking God to speak to through his word.

**purpose:** To be changed by Jesus; submitting to the Holy Spirit, scripture, and each other for transformation.

**guidelines:** Please read, review, or discuss weekly. The group guidelines are listed on the last page.

**STORY**

**setting the scene:** A brief context for the passage. See last page.

**tell the story:** Encourage people to engage with the storyteller rather than look at the handout. Don't get distracted by pronouncing names. Notice how each person took responsibility for his own assignment, doing the work of God that was right in front of him.

**rebuild the story:** Try different ways of doing this.

**read the passage:** Always close by reading the passage out loud.

**HEAD**

**to help us examine what the word shows**

Leaders, edit/omit questions as needed for your group.

(spend about 15 minutes here)

- What patterns or repetitions do you notice in the text?
- Look at verse 3:5. What do you think was happening in the hearts of those “nobles” compared to the rulers in v. 9, 12, 14 and 15?
- What do you imagine it was like to be a person working on rebuilding a giant stone wall?
- What does this passage teach you about God and his mission in the world?

**HEART**

**to help us wrestle with what we believe**

It's important to use “I” statements here.

(spend about 30 minutes here)

- In what situations do you find you have a heart like those nobles of verse 5?
- What are the everyday tasks or interactions that you tend to devalue? (Leader note: See Ephesians 2:10 and 1 Corinthians 10:31 for encouragement that faithfulness in day to day, mundane tasks, places, and relationships are part of a bigger work that God is doing in the world.)
- Read Phil 2:1-11. How does the example and outcome of Jesus' humility challenge or encourage you as you consider the humility it takes to be part of God's rebuilding project?

**HANDS**

**to help bring the truth into our everyday realities**

Try to avoid creating a checklist of things to do better.

(spend about 10 minutes here)

- How can you engage with God's work this week?
- Who has modelled faithfulness in the small things for you? Who do you know who might need to be seen in the small things? How could you encourage that person this week?

**closing prayer:** Lord, we confess that so often we despise the work that you have put right in front of us. Please humble us and show us the joy of engaging in your redemptive work with the people and callings that are right in front of us.

**next week's passage:** Ask for a volunteer to story the passage for next week: **Nehemiah 4:1-14**

## LEADER NOTES

### ADDITIONAL READING

At the beginning of a new study, it can be helpful to read the entirety of a book to get its larger context. If you're interested, you might try reading through Nehemiah in one sitting. Many scholars believe that Ezra and Nehemiah were meant to be read as one book, so you could try reading those books together all in one sitting as well! If nothing else, reading what has happened in Nehemiah up to this point (Neh 1:1 - 2:10) will give you a better sense of where we are in the narrative this week. Also, read Philippians 2 on the humility and exaltation of Christ as a part of God's redemptive plan.

Watch The Bible Project Ezra-Nehemiah overview video : <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/ezra-nehemiah/>

## NOTE FROM GROUPS TEAM

**Welcome back to group!** Our hope is that your group will be an environment that is inviting and welcoming for people to build relationships with God and each other. One way we create this environment is through starting our time together with two things: a time of connecting with each other through casual conversation and/or answering an icebreaker question and a time of connecting with the Lord in prayer. Think about how you and your group members will reconnect and welcome new people into your group this fall.

**Note:** View new Icebreakers in Leader Resources on the Church Center App or at [midtownfellowship.org](http://midtownfellowship.org) (or pg.42 of the Groups Apprentice Manual)

## NOTE FROM THE PASTORS

**Hey 12 South! You are discussing the passage before the sermon this year. You received a video from Lisa and Elliott via email on September 7 with their vision for making this change. Lean in to it! And reach out for coaching help when you have questions.**

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Thank you so much for your willingness to lead your discipleship group this year! I love that we are reading about the communal nature of God's vision for rebuilding his city as you are launching a new season of group. Tonight is about reminding people that God is at work building his church for his glory in the world, and about inviting them into that mission collectively. This book isn't about uncovering your unique purpose, it's about plugging into God's much larger purpose in the world. This work requires a group of people - Nehemiah couldn't build the wall all on his own, after all. And that's just as true about God's work today. As you start out this semester, remember YOU ARE NOT ALONE. There is a whole team of people cheering you on, praying for you, and waiting to help you. When you need help, support, or whatever else this semester, reach out and let someone know. That's the way this work happens.

-The Pastoral Team

## NEHEMIAH CLOSE TO HOME

week of September 12, 2021

### NEHEMIAH 3:1-16 (ESV)

#### Discipleship Group Guidelines:

- **Safe Group:** We strive for an environment where everyone can be open, and honest about his or her struggles and victories.
- **Confidentiality:** What is said in the group stays in the group. Please find a private place to video-chat during Group meetings.
- **Listen:** We want to value one another by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond while someone is sharing.
- **Pause:** Allowing a pause in the conversation after one person shares and before the next person shares gives the person sharing a chance to finish. A Pause also gives the group an opportunity to consider before responding.
- **Silence:** It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for people to think deeply, to gather their thoughts in order to share, and to genuinely consider what others have shared. Mute yourself on video chat to avoid interrupting the speaker or causing distractions.
- **One Conversation at a Time:** Be considerate of others as they are sharing. Side conversations are especially disruptive when communicating over video chat.
- **No Fixing:** We are not here to fix each other; Jesus does that part. Give encouragement and ask questions, but try not to solve or fix one another.
- **No Rescuing:** When people are sharing something deeply personal, please resist the tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or their situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause people to stop sharing.
- **Be Self-Aware:** Be mindful of how you are personally affecting the small group environment through your words, actions, and non-verbal communication. Be sensitive about the amount of time you share, whether too much (dominating) or not enough (hiding).
- **Use “I” Statements:** It is very easy to talk about other people’s issues, but, for our purposes, we want to put ourselves on the table. We will use “I” statements rather than “them”, “the church”, “people”, “you”, “us”, “we”, etc.
- **Resolve Conflict Biblically:** As a group we commit to extend grace to one another. Conflict is not bad, rather it can be an opportunity for growth. We are all being transformed to be more like Jesus, so conflict and change are a part of that journey. (Matthew 18)
- **Manage Technology:** Let’s respect one another by silencing other alerts on our device that might cause distraction during Group video chats.



#### Setting the Scene

Nehemiah, a Jew who had risen to the position of cup-bearer to the king of Persia, asked the king for permission to rebuild the city of his forefathers (Jerusalem) and its walls. God granted Nehemiah great favor with the king, and the king said yes. This was a huge deal! Walls were an especially important part of any ancient city, providing safety and communicating honor. In last week’s passage, Nehemiah invited the people into God’s vision for rebuilding Jerusalem. This week, thanks to Nehemiah’s careful planning and administration, the building gets started.



#### Scripture

##### Nehemiah 3:1-16 (ESV)

1 Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brothers the priests, and they built the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and set its doors. They consecrated it as far as the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Tower of Hananel. 2 And next to him the men of Jericho built. And next to them[a] Zaccur the son of Imri built. 3 The sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate. They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. 4 And next to them Meremoth the son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz repaired. And next to them Meshullam the son of Berechiah, son of Meshezabel repaired. And next to them Zadok the son of Baana repaired.

5 And next to them the Tekoites repaired, but their nobles would not stoop to serve their Lord.[b] 6 Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Gate of Yeshanah. [c] They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. 7 And next to them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, the seat of the governor of the province Beyond the River. 8 Next to them Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, goldsmiths, repaired. Next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, repaired, and they restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. 9 Next to them Rephaiah the son of Hur, ruler of half the district of[d] Jerusalem, repaired. 10 Next to them Jedaiah the son of Harumaph repaired opposite his house. And next to him Hattush the son of Hashabneiah repaired. 11 Malchijah the son of Harim and Hasshub the son of Pahath-moab repaired another section and the Tower of the Ovens. 12 Next to him Shallum the son of Hallohesh, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, repaired, he and his daughters. 13 Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and repaired a thousand cubits[e] of the wall, as far as the Dung Gate. 14 Malchijah the son of Rechab, ruler of the district of Beth-haccherem, repaired the Dung Gate. He rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars.

15 And Shallum the son of Col-hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate. He rebuilt it and covered it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And he built the wall of the Pool of Shelah of the king’s garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the city of David. 16 After him Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, ruler of half the district of Beth-zur, repaired to a point opposite the tombs of David, as far as the artificial pool, and as far as the house of the mighty men.