

NEHEMIAH
ASK FOR HELP
week of September 26, 2021
NEHEMIAH 4:15-23 (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. In the midst of crisis and discouragement, we are called to remember God's unchanging power and holiness and to rely on one another for mutual sacrifice and encouragement.

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.

icebreaker: What are 3 words to describe how you are feeling coming into tonight's meeting?

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.

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 questions do you have as you read through this passage? The point is not to answer these questions, but to practice being curious about Scripture.
- What do you think it would have been like to work or live in Jerusalem under these conditions?
- What sacrifices do you see people making in this passage to reach their common goal?
- In what ways do you see people working together for God's vision in this passage?

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 avoid asking for help? Why?
- What do you give up in order to answer someone else's cries for help? What are you unwilling to give up?
- Re-read v. 20. How does knowing that God is ultimately the one fighting for you affect your willingness to fight on behalf of someone else, or to ask someone else to fight for you?

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)

- Give everyone a pen and ask: Where do you need help in your life? It can be spiritual, emotional, relationship, physical, or logistical. Give silence for prayer about what to do with that need, then have them write how they want to respond/who they want to ask for help. Pair people up and have them share their answers. (This is to help people own their need to ask for help, rather than stating it aloud to the group and assuming it's taken care of. That doesn't really work, and avoids the vulnerability of asking someone for help.)

closing prayer: O God, fountain of love, pour love into our souls, that we may love those whom you love with the love you give us, and think and speak about them tenderly, meekly, lovingly, and so loving our brothers and sisters for your sake, may we grow in your love, and live in your love, that by living your love we may live in you, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. [E.B. Pusey]

next week's passage: Ask for a volunteer to story the passage for next week: Nehemiah 5:1-13

LEADER NOTES

ADDITIONAL READING

Psalm 31:14-15, Matthew 22: 37-40, Galatians 6:1-5

“How strange that we should ordinarily feel compelled to hide our wounds when we are all wounded! Community requires the ability to expose our wounds and weaknesses to our fellow creatures. It also requires the ability to be affected by the wounds of others... But even more important is the love that arises among us when we share, both ways, our woundedness.”

A Different Drum by M. Scott Peck

NOTE FROM GROUPS TEAM

Why do we use group guidelines? Guidelines are another tool for creating a safe group environment. We want to honor God and one another in our discussion, though most of us have not practiced this well in our relationships. Guidelines give us an opportunity to talk about shared expectations for engaging with one another. Consider this question: When we invite new people to our group, how are the guidelines helpful?

NOTE FROM THE PASTORS

We're [3 weeks] into group, and it's possible that you've already started to face some obstacles. Maybe you're getting discouraged about attendance. Maybe you've got that one person who never stops talking and takes the group into all kinds of bizarre territory. Or maybe you wish you had that person because all that's happening now is loads of long silences. Do you need help with the dynamics of your group? Tell your coach! Ask for help! Or maybe you need help responding to someone else's cries for help from within your group. Great. Let your coach know. Caring for other people also is not something that we can do alone.

Or what about you? Like as a person. How are you doing? Where do you need help? Participating in God's mission of rebuilding is a community effort - everyone needs help because it's too big to accomplish alone, and that includes you. Don't be so selfish that you would keep your need to yourself. Give someone else the joy, the honor, the privilege of being part of God's work of rebuilding in your own life and heart.

-The Pastoral Team

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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. Whether in person or on video, please meet in a private place.
- **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.
- **One Conversation at a Time:** Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.
- **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 devices.



Setting the Scene

In last week’s text, great opposition came against the work to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Thanks to quality leadership and trust in the Lord, the people persevered and the immediate threat diminished. This does not mean the threat disappeared entirely. This week we read about the continued readiness of the people against attack.



Scripture

Nehemiah 4:15-23 (ESV)

15 When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, we all returned to the wall, each to his work. 16 From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah, 17 who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other.

18 And each of the builders had his sword strapped at his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me. 19 And I said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, “The work is great and widely spread, and we are separated on the wall, far from one another. 20 In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.”

21 So we labored at the work, and half of them held the spears from the break of dawn until the stars came out. 22 I also said to the people at that time, “Let every man and his servant pass the night within Jerusalem, that they may be a guard for us by night and may labor by day.” 23 So neither I nor my brothers nor my servants nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us took off our clothes; each kept his weapon at his right hand.