

Community Builders 7

Nehemiah 7

Expanding the Vision

Establishing a Stronger Community



Nehemiah's original vision and calling had been to return to Jerusalem to reconstruct the walls. After much hard work and frequent opposition his task had now been completed (6:15, 7:1,)

However his work was far from finished. (the rebuilt walls were an excellent monument to a previously great city, but the community was sparse.) So Nehemiah tackled his new assignments with the same commitment and perseverance. He certainly continued to have a passion.

As Christians do we sometimes feel we lack a passion and purpose in our lives.

Is God calling us to have a renewed vision for Him and His work?

'Those who hope in the Lord renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles: they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint.'

Isaiah 40:31.

Verses to ponder:

Heb 6:10-12, Titus 2:14, Col 3:23-35, 1 Cor 15:58.

Establishing a Stronger Community

Renewing a destroyed and desolate city was equally as important as rebuilding the walls.

Nehemiah's Strategy

1. Persistent Prayer

Prayer is a noticeable feature in this book and we have a continual record of Nehemiah's deep dependence on God.

See 1:4-11, 2:4,12,18,29, 4:4,14,15,20, 5:9,19, 6:9,24, 7:5.

Jesus not only taught His disciples to pray but spent much of His life in prayer to His Heavenly Father.

The early church was built on prayer as it continued to grow and develop.

See Phil 4:6, Eph 1:15-19.

'To pray is to change – the central avenue God uses to transform us.'

'Prayer is the Christians vital breath.'

'Prayer is conversation with God.'

Without prayer the church and our work as Christians is dead.

How important is personal and corporate prayer to us?

2. Developing Team Work

Initially Nehemiah appeared to take full responsibility for the rebuilding of the walls; but now this was completed and the community grew there was a need for others to come on board with him.

Various appointments

Hanani his brother – first mentioned in chapter 1 and Hananiah, 'Man full of integrity, feared God.'

Gatekeepers – for regular supervision and protection of the city

Singers – leading community in worship.

Levites – teachers, exponents of the scripture and also having a pastoral role.

We are all part of the body of the church. Each have our different roles and gifts in order to function effectively.

Have we looked at our SHAPE?

3. A Balanced Life Style

With the appointment and emergence of the various roles Nehemiah was able to encourage the holistic life of the community, physical, spiritual and intellectual.

We too as Christians need to lead healthy lives in order to grow in our faith. Our core values, worship, discipleship, fellowship, ministry and mission are in line with Nehemiah's reaching and example.

4. Encouraging commitment and responsibility

When Nehemiah first returned to Jerusalem the city was sparsely populated many were only just returning from exile and others were living in the rural areas. In order for this to become a thriving city it would need to increase its permanent residents. For many the move was a sacrificial act. Every family was encouraged to play an active part in city life, also making financial contributions to community life. Nehemiah had a vision and he encouraged others to participate in this vision.

We too have a vision at USBC

'to have a heart for God, to have God's heart for others.'

We too need to be fully committed to God's work and take full responsibility for the work he has for us to do.

Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God ... be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will. Roms 12:1,2,

For small group study – Nehemiah 7

1. Is there anything in this chapter which you find particularly challenging?
2. How can we make our prayer life more effective both personally and in our small group?
3. It was important to Nehemiah that he had teams of people working with him to build up the community. Is there anything specific you feel God is calling you to be involved in at USBC or in the community?
4. Have you thought about your SHAPE?
5. pray for guidance as we seek God's vision for us at USBC.