



Discussion Questions **LEADER GUIDE**

Week of 3/14/24

Hi LifeGroup Leaders! Thanks for all you do each week to prepare for and to facilitate the group discussion. Your commitment is a valuable part of the work God's Spirit is doing in, among, and through us as a church.

Please feel free to modify the questions below and to limit your discussion to just a few of the questions. There's no expectation that your group should cover each question each week!

Text: Nehemiah 1

Icebreaker: What motivates you to pray?

1. Read all of chapter 1. What was significant to you from these verses or from the sermon you heard this week? Why?

2. In verse 4, we see Nehemiah's reaction to the news recorded in verse 3. What can we learn about Nehemiah from how he responds?

Nehemiah's actions reveal a heart that is sensitive to God's purposes. He is most likely in a very comfortable position as the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes (see 2:1) in Susa, yet his physical comfort doesn't make him content or complacent (or some other "c" word you might come up with!). Nehemiah is passionate about his people and the city of Jerusalem because both are central to God's promises contained in the covenants of the OT. Also, we see that Nehemiah's response is to turn to God for help, which tells us he is a man who fears and knows God. Prayer is like a reflex for him.

Application: What kind of topics in our world do you have a passion for or that stir your heart? Have you considered how prayer for that cause could be an action God desires you to take?

You might help people think about this by asking "What do you see in the world that is not as it ought to be?"

3. How does Nehemiah describe God in verse 5? Given Nehemiah's situation, what significance do you see in the words he uses?

Nehemiah has a very high view of the power and majesty of God. It's that belief that helps him view his own situation from the right perspective. The King of Persia is powerful, but God is more powerful. The concerns of Jerusalem are important, but the

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perspective of heaven is more critical. We might think as well of the way Jesus begins to pray in “The Lord’s Prayer” in Matthew 6.

Application: When you feel overwhelmed or grieved, what attributes of God are most comforting to you?

4. Verses 5-11 contain Nehemiah’s prayer to God. What stands out to you from what he says? Based on what Nehemiah says, what does he seem to believe about God?

There are a lot of things that could be mentioned here...Nehemiah’s appeal to the covenants (God’s commitments and expectations to Israel), the confession of corporate sins as well as individual, the repeated use of the word “servant,” etc. Each of these is worth drawing out and discussing more.

Application: Is there anything from his prayer that we might want to consider incorporating into our own prayers?

5. Verse 11 tips us off to what’s about to unfold in the following chapters as Nehemiah is a man of action. Why was it important for Nehemiah’s first action to be prayer?

We may not often think of prayer as being an action. Sometimes we may even think of it as something that delays true action. Nehemiah’s example and the testimony of all of Scripture, though, show us that *prayer is the work* (or at least part of it) we are called to engage in. Prayer should be our first action before we act in other ways.

Application: What’s an upcoming issue or concern in your life that you could commit to praying about this next week? Consider sharing this with the group and praying for each other.