



Discussion Questions **LEADER GUIDE**

Week of 4/28/24

Text: Nehemiah 3-4

Icebreaker: When have you faced opposition? What kind of response do you typically have when you feel opposed by others?

1. Read Nehemiah 3-4. What stands out to you from the sermon or from the chapters?

2. It's hard to not get lost in the names of chapter 3! At a high level, what do you notice in these verses? What's repeated or what patterns do you see?

Here are a few observations. First, notice the repeated phrases, "And next to them...," and "After him..." Notice also the very specific mention of different sections of the wall and gates. Each person is working in a coordinated effort, close by but also in a distinct section. Also, you might point out the different occupations mentioned—priests, perfumers, rulers, servants, goldsmiths, merchants, etc. People from a wide range of positions in the culture all joined together for a common effort.

Application: When have you been part of an effort that required you to take on a specific task alongside others? Do you see this happening in the church...either at Calvary or in other churches you've been a part of? Explain.

3. The statement is repeated in chapter 3 that a particular person made repairs "opposite his own house," meaning that people took responsibility for repairs near where they lived. Why would this make good sense for rebuilding effort?

This shows up in verses 10, 23, 28, and 30. This was no doubt efficient since there would be little need to commute far to "get to work," but it may have also incentivized better work since the repairs were so close to home. Also, who knows all the problems of a particular location better than those who live there every day?

Application: What potential advantages could come from Jesus followers seeking to minister to the needs of those "opposite their own houses"?

God's work is not always about "efficiency," but there can be some effective uses of resources when ministry is done near to where we live. There can also be a great advantage to ministry done in the same place where we live. We know the needs of our neighbors and our neighborhood. We (hopefully) have credibility with those people we live close to since we are "one of them." This in no way means that cross-cultural ministry or overseas missions should be scrapped! That's also how God accomplishes his purposes; however, for most of us, we are called to minister in the places we live, work, and socialize.

4. Chapter 4 details the opposition and challenges the builders faced. How would you characterize or summarize the difficulties they encounter?

They are mocked, ridiculed, threatened, etc. They also faced the discouragement of all the rubble and a task that may have felt impossible to do. It was no doubt exhausting work, even without the threats from their opponents.

Application: What kind of obstacles do we encounter in our own day as we seek to participate in God's purposes?

5. *Application:* Nehemiah takes action in chapter 4 to keep the work going even through difficulty. What does he say and what does he do that we can learn from?

Nehemiah organizes the workers so that they can continue the work AND face the opposition. He prays (again) as he encounters the threats. He also reminds the people of God's protection and provision for them in the work. Each of these could be helpful to us as we think about participating in God's mission. Organization and leadership are essential. Prayer is nonnegotiable. Encouragement is needed. Nehemiah doesn't flee or distance himself from the problems, but keeps working and leading because he keeps trusting the "great and awesome" God (v. 14 and chapter 1, verse 5) to bring success.