



Discussion Questions **LEADER GUIDE**

Week of 5/5/24

Text: Nehemiah 5-6

Icebreaker: When have you noticed people being mistreated or marginalized by others? What was happening?

1. Read Nehemiah 5-6. What stands out to you from the sermon or from the chapters?

2. Chapter 5 introduces an internal “crisis” unfolding in the midst of—and even attributed to—the rebuilding effort. What does Nehemiah’s response reveal about his level of concern for the people?

Nehemiah shows us that he cares for the welfare of the people. He’s not building a wall for the sake of the wall, but he knows the wall is critical for the welfare of the city and its inhabitants. As can happen, a major effort in one direction can cause lapses in other areas. As a leader, he faces the issue of mistreatment head-on and confronts those who are responsible for it. A less caring leader might consider the welfare of the people to be secondary... “Let’s not get distracted as long as progress on the wall is being made!” Nehemiah, though, has the welfare of the people as part of his primary objective. We might remind ourselves of this motive by remembering how Nehemiah responded in chapter 1 to news of the situation in Jerusalem.

Application: What happens when a leader is so focused on accomplishing a task that he or she forgets to care for the needs and sacrifices of those who are doing the work?

3. In verses 14-19, what personal sacrifice is Nehemiah making for the good of the people?

He’s willing to forego the allowance he’s entitled to. He knows that this “right” of his would come at the cost of those around him who would be tasked to provide it, so he gives it up for the good of everyone. This reminds us of a similar logic in the New Testament that Paul adopted (see 1 Cor 9).

Application: Who do you know who has made strategic sacrifices for the good of others around them? What did they do and, as far as you can tell, what was the impact?

4. Chapter 6:1-14 describes multiple schemes to take out Nehemiah and stop the work. How does he respond?

First, we should notice that Nehemiah responds with great wisdom and discernment in these situations. He’s not tricked by their schemes. Second, he exposes their deceit head-on, calling a lie a lie. He could have been passive or have attempted to ignore them (which might be a good response in different circumstances...thus, our need for wisdom!), but he makes it clear that he knows what they’re up to. Third, and most important, Nehemiah once again exhibits a commitment to prayer (vv. 9 and 14).

Application: What can we learn from Nehemiah’s response that can help us as we face opposition to God’s purposes?

Building Christ-centered communities of people fully devoted to loving God and loving others.

5. *“Lightening Round” Application:* Take time to pray about these as a group.
- (1) What situation are you facing where you could echo Nehemiah’s prayer in verse 9, “But now, O God, strengthen my hands?”

 - (2) What would you love to see happen so that, when complete, others conclude, “this work has been accomplished with the help of God?” (see v. 16).