

For the Family

Review our story so far:

Nehemiah went to Jerusalem to repair the walls around the city. He rallied the people to rebuild them, spread them around the wall, and began the work. Some enemies of Jerusalem tried to stop them, but Nehemiah prayed and posted guards. Despite increased opposition from their enemies, they completed the wall in 52 days!

Read together Nehemiah 7:1-4

Explain that Nehemiah's job has changed from getting the walls built to helping the people become a community. He appointed people to fill the jobs they needed done: gatekeepers, worship leaders, and priests. He also appointed new leaders.

Read again Nehemiah 7:2 – I gave my brother Hanani and Hananiah the governor of the castle charge over Jerusalem, for he was a more *faithful* and *God-fearing* man than many.

Talk together about the two character traits of Hananiah that led Nehemiah to appoint him to be a leader. He was *faithful* and *God-fearing*:

"Faithful" means that you do what you say. You don't tell lies. You keep your promises. People can trust you to do your work.

Read Proverbs 10:9 – Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out.

"God-fearing" means to respect and honor God, to let him be in charge. It means you do what God wants you to do.

Read together Proverbs 1:7 – The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Talk together about how important it is to be faithful (to do what you say you will do) and to fear God (to do what God wants).

Pray together that you will always be faithful and that you will always honor and respect God in everything you do.



Building More than Walls

Nehemiah 7

Our Story So Far: Nehemiah learned that the walls and gates around Jerusalem were in ruins. He prayed, got permission from King Artaxerxes, and went to Jerusalem. After inspecting the walls, he rallied the people to do the work. Some local leaders accused them of rebelling against the king. Nehemiah replied that the God of heaven would help them rebuild the wall.

Sanballat and other enemies of Jerusalem continued to oppose the work. Nehemiah prayed, and set up security all around the wall. He encouraged the people to remember the greatness of God, and to fight for their families. Some among the wealthy were exploiting the poor. Nehemiah spoke out against this, and the wealthy agreed to stop charging interest, and to return property to their original owner.

When the work was almost finished, Sanballat and the others renewed their opposition. They tried to trick Nehemiah to meet with them, spread false rumors about him, and bribed a prophet to give him a false oracle. Nehemiah knew that their intentions were evil, and he did not allow them to circumvent the work.

This Week: Nehemiah changes his work from building the wall to building the community. He appoints leaders and other workers and begins the work of settling the returning exiles into the rebuilt Jerusalem.

Open

What character traits should we look for in choosing leaders?

Review

1. How was it possible that the wall which lay in ruins for so many years was rebuilt in 52 days?
What did it take to accomplish this?

Read Nehemiah 7:1-4

Character and Leadership

2

1. How did Nehemiah describe Hananiah?

2. How would you define “faithful” as it is used here?

Read Proverbs 10:9

Read Proverbs 13:6

What do these add to your definition?

3. How would you define “God-fearing” as it is used here?

Read Proverbs 1:7

Read Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

What do these add to your definition?

Reflect

Would you describe yourself as faithful and God-fearing?

Would others describe you that way?

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13

1. Why do you think Paul lists the qualifications of leaders but not their duties?

Why would he emphasize character?

2. Do you think these characteristics are just for leaders, or would they apply to every disciple of Jesus? Explain

Reflect

Which of these characteristics do you see in your life?

Which ones would you like to see stronger or deeper in your life?

Standing Watch

3-4

1. What steps does Nehemiah take to secure the city?
Why would he need to do this?

How important is it for faithful people (military, law enforcement) to stand guard over a community?

How important is it for faithful people to stand guard over a Christian community?

Read Hebrews 13:7-9, 17

What does the phrase “keeping watch over your souls” mean? 17

What can we do to help them “do this with joy and not with groaning”? How can we support our leaders?

Worship

1

Nehemiah mentions singers four times in chapter 7 (1, 44, 67, 73). Eight times in Nehemiah, he challenges the people to “give thanks to God.” Why is worship such an important part of building a community of faith?

Worship can be defined as “an appropriate response to the revelation of God.” What do you think about that definition?

How would you define worship?

Takeaways

Share with the group your take away from this discussion.

Next Steps:

I will strive to deepen my resolve in the following areas:

- To live a life of integrity and reverence.
- To diligently guard the gates of truth.
- To engage in true worship.

Memory Verse – Psalm 127:1

*Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.*

*Unless the Lord watches over the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.*