

Icebreaker:

What has been one true highlight for you from the summer?

Read Nehemiah 1 and discuss the following questions:

1. Who is the best leader you've ever served with? What made him/her a good leader?
2. Nehemiah and the Jewish people had been in exile, or away from home for many years. Where is "home" for you? Do you have any unfinished, even unstarted, "business" at home that bothers you?
3. What was Nehemiah's response to the plight of those in Jerusalem? What does this response suggest?
4. Nehemiah weeps when he hears about the fate of Jerusalem in Nehemiah 1:1-4. Do you weep or mourn about the brokenness of your hometown, state, nation, or world? Or do you ignore the brokenness so that you aren't overwhelmed by it all?
5. In this story, Nehemiah will use his influence to restore the community of Jerusalem. How might you use your influence or power to further God's mission?
6. What flaws in society are particularly troubling to you? Do you see your own sinfulness connecting to those flaws?
7. Are there ways that—after I admit my faults—I can relax and let them go? What steps can I take to keep from reliving over and over the wrongs I have done?

Prayer:

As you pray for one another, please pray for the following needs in our church family:

prayer requests

> Prayers of healing for John Lindenschmidt and Jamie Jones.

In the book of Nehemiah, we see a real leader who is also very vulnerable. In the first few verses, he weeps, mourns, fasts, and prays. He prays with great humility and passion here in chapter one. We can learn much from this ancient character who works for restoration and leads by example so that others in his hometown of Jerusalem can live a better life with God and others.

1. Nehemiah is an example of a good leader in many respects, including how he prays with humility and weeps for his hometown in chapter one. Describe who has been a good leader to you.
2. This question is getting at your original home, or hometown. "Business" could mean physical projects but more likely means working on relationships or something similar. What is your unfinished business back at home or in your home today?
3. Nehemiah wept, mourned, fasted, and prayed. He was heartbroken over hearing news about Jerusalem and the people there. Nehemiah truly cares for his people, even those far away, and not only wants to help but will do what it takes to help.
4. Nehemiah is broken when he sees brokenness. How do you feel about brokenness in the world? Sometimes we feel we almost have to ignore what is happening around us just to keep going or not feel overwhelmed. At other times, God may be calling us to stop and get involved.
5. We will see as we read that Nehemiah is a man of influence and action. He is cupbearer to the King, which is a high position. Many of us are in positions of influence or have resources or power to bring about change. Recognize where you have influence and be courageous to use it for good.
6. Some societal flaws might include (but are not limited to) poverty, prejudice, racism, suicide and other complicated issues. Our own sinfulness might connect to sins and flaws that exist in our communities. Discuss some of those connections.
7. In the sermon Sunday, Jerry discussed confession and the assurance of pardon. Confession of our sins to God and to trusted Christians is a biblical principle. It is good and cleansing for us. In response to confession, God is faithful and just and will forgive us (1 John 1:9) and Jesus Christ does not condemn us, but intercedes for us so that nothing will separate us from God's love (Romans 8:34-39).