

Icebreaker:

Would you prefer to play an individual sport or team sport? Would you prefer to be self-employed or work with a close-knit team?

Read Nehemiah 3 and discuss:

1. In Nehemiah 3:1, it says they consecrated or sanctified the wall. What might it mean to “sanctify” a wall or a building or a home? How might we view such structures, if they were sanctified?
2. In the first verse, Nehemiah says that the high priest and the other priests did their part in building. Why do you think he included them in the first verse? Is it important for a church today to see its pastors participating in the work?
3. Some in Nehemiah 3 chose not to rebuild the wall (nobles of Tekoa, verse 5). What is a typical good excuse that you use not to join in God's work?
4. In Nehemiah's description, the people helped repair the sections close to their homes and “next to” their actual neighbors. What is something you could do this week for God “close to home”?
5. Some of the wall would have used the remnants of the previous wall that had crumbled. When you have used brokenness in your own life for the greater good?
6. Nehemiah lists people from different professions that work on the wall (perfume-makers, goldsmiths, rulers of half-districts). What is a gift or a talent you have that you have been surprised God has been able to use?
7. Later generations would have read this passage and would have seen those who had gone before them had left a legacy by rebuilding the walls. What is something that previous generations left you that has impacted you in a positive way (could be emotional, physical, or a skill that you were taught)?

Prayer:

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

prayer requests

- > Prayers of healing for Theresa Beardsley, Ron Bell, John Lindenschmidt, and Jamie Jones.

At first reading, chapter three of Nehemiah might be boring. It seems like merely a list of all the citizens rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. But we need to dig a little deeper. The list says that the people rebuilt the wall next to their homes (where they could show pride in their work and in their home). And they built next to their neighbors (so that they shared in community the work of God). They had various professions and backgrounds. It is similar to the description of the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 – everyone doing their part so that God's plan can be accomplished. What is your role in rebuilding what's broken around you? What is your part in the body of Christ?

1. Sanctify means to set apart or declare holy. Anything can set apart to serve God, to pray over and commission it to God's work. We might view such walls, houses or buildings as more significant or purposeful.
2. It is important to see the priests, and maybe today pastors, doing their part, getting their hands dirty, participating in the work, not just directing the work or supervising. It's like the officer in the military leading the troops into battle instead of staying behind in safety. We all have a part to play and feel better when we all contribute.
3. Some scholars think that the nobles in Tekoa may have been afraid of the other officials (Nehemiah 2:19) sabotaging their work or harming them. Doing God's work is risky sometimes. It can risk safety or reputation, and can be costly in time, money, and emotional energy. Will you count the cost and take the risk?
4. It's important to see they worked near their homes. They could take pride in seeing their work every day. They worked next to their neighbors. They shared a common purpose and common work. God often calls us to work not in faraway lands, but to bloom right where we are planted.
5. It was common in Israel to use old blocks and remnants of previous walls and cities to rebuild. Spiritually, God often uses remnants of our brokenness to help others, if we are open to it. What is a broken area you can use for God? Leaders, be willing to lead your group by sharing first.
6. It is fascinating to read how Nehemiah (and God) used everyone. It is a beautiful picture of how God uses all of us to do his work. You might read aloud 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 to see a similar picture of the body of Christ.
7. In Jewish culture, knowing your family history and genealogy was important. It would be an honor to read about your ancestors rebuilding the wall. What has your family left to you? It could be an inheritance of money or things, and could also be something they taught you, showed you, or a memory of grace and goodness.