

2021 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

August 22

Pastor Aaron wrapped up the series: "From the Ground Up" out of the Book of Nehemiah. The "happily ever after" we expected after chapter 12 didn't last long, as we see things unravel a bit in chapter 13. Pastor Aaron's teaching focused in on "relationships": **Relationship with money, Relationship with time and Relationship with others.** He also highlighted the idea that God was never really about the walls...He was more interested in restoring their hearts of His people.

Chapter 13 highlights a series of problems that needed to be dealt with and these problems can really be described as community-based problems...or more specifically, "problems with the hearts of the community." Problems with Tithes and Offerings, Abandoning the Sabbath, and intermarriage with unbelievers.

At first, we may not think these problems have a lot to do with us. However, the more we study Scripture and the more we see the things that are emphasized over and over again, we see these three Relationship issues emerge as themes throughout the story of the Bible.

Community Prayer:

Father, as we conclude our study of the book of Nehemiah may we be indelibly marked with how we fit into this story. As we look at ourselves through these three areas of Relationships (Money, Time, Others) help us by the power of the Holy Spirit to turn these problems into opportunities to serve you better in these areas; in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Opening Questions

1. Which of these three Relationship areas are you strong in? Which is more challenging? Why?

EXPLORATION

Read the passages below...what can you learn about what it means to follow Jesus from these passages? (Have someone read from their bible)

Problem 1: Neglecting the Tithes and Offerings

Nehemiah 13:4-13

2. Why would placing a relative of questionable character to have a room in the Temple for his personal business be considered unwise?
3. Nehemiah displayed "righteous indignation" against Tobiah; have you ever had to confront someone in this manner as a result of



2021 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

- taking advantage of others? If so, share your experience with the group.
4. Why should diplomacy be set aside when the things God ordained have been violated?

Prayer 1: A Prayer for a Return to Worship of God

Nehemiah 13:14

5. Nehemiah asked to Remember his work, which can be restated as asking God for His help in his endeavor. How often do you ask God for help in the work He has called you to do? When we fail to do this what message are we sending to God?

Malachi 3:8-10

6. Why are Tithes and Offerings important to God?
7. What message does it send to you when God says to Test Him with this command?
8. Why do you think God's blessings in this area is more than we need?

Problem 2: Abandoning the Sabbath

Nehemiah 13:15-21

The Sabbath defined: setting one day apart each week for worship and rest.

- **Not legalistic but God honoring**

"We have become perhaps the most emotionally exhausted, psychologically overworked, spiritually malnourished people in history. It is not as though we do not love God – we love God deeply. We just do not know how to sit with God anymore." ---- A.J. Swoboda

9. What is the greatest benefit you receive from Fellowshiping with other followers of Jesus on a weekly basis? (one answer per person)
10. How does **Chick-fil-a** recognize the importance of this? What value does it communicate to the employees and to the communities where they serve?



2021 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

Prayer 2: A Prayer for Mercy for how We have wasted Time

Nehemiah 13:22

11. Why is God's Mercy (holding back what we each deserve) so important in your life?

Time is a precious gift and Nehemiah wants the people to seize the day and serve their God.

Problem 3: Intermarriage with Unbelievers

There is a cultural thing going on here that we may not fully understand today. The Scriptures speaks of relationship to foreigners; but what it means is God's chosen people relating to people who follow other gods, practice other religious ways, and in many ways their practices are counter to what God wants His people to do.

Nehemiah 13:23-29

12. What are some reasons for followers of Jesus not to marry someone that is not a follower of Jesus?
13. What are some reasons you have heard from people you know who have done this?

Prayer 3: A Prayer for Restoration of Right Relationship

Nehemiah 13:30-31

14. What is the ripple effect of spiritual leaders engaging in this practice?
15. How can this affect the next generations?

2 Corinthians 6:14

16. What does this verse say about your future spouse or how you might counsel your children and grandchildren as they navigate this passage?

THE TAKEAWAY

- Spend your money in ways that cultivate a heart for God.
- Spend your time in ways that create room for you to stay connected to God deeply.
- Develop relationships that enable you and others to more fully experience God.



2021 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

NOW IN CHRIST:

Romans 8:3.."For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering."

The story is not over and there are still disappointments along the way but a faithful follower keeps on doing what their master says. All of this doing is with the knowledge that the story is not over, God is still doing great things and we get to join Him in it.

PRAYER REQUESTS

