

STORIES OF FAITH

Nehemiah

Emma West

Nehemiah is a story of a faith that moves into action. In this small group study we tackle the issue of justice and think about how we personally, and as a group can live out our faith together, for the sake of the world, and the glory of God.

PRAY

Lord, the God of heaven, we welcome you into our midst this evening and ask that you would make yourself known to us through the power and presence of your Holy Spirit. Let your ear be attentive to our conversations and prayers and speak to us and through us as we open your word. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

OPENING ROUND

Nehemiah tells the people in Chapter 8:10 'Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength'.

Take it in turns to go round and share something that's brought you joy in the past week (it might be something big or small).

FROM WEEPING TO REBUILDING

Read Nehemiah 1:1-11 together – taking it in turns to read.

What stands out to you from Nehemiah's prayer?

Charles Swindoll writes, "Nehemiah was called to build the wall, but first he wept over the ruins."

What issues (whether locally or worldwide) stir you or break your heart?

Go round the group and share.

In the story of Nehemiah we see him take a 'they' problem – (the walls are broken and the gates have been burned in Jerusalem, leaving the Jewish remnant in trouble and disgrace) and turn it into a 'me' problem (he prays to God and confesses his own sins and disobedience, and then goes to the King with a proposal), devising a 'we' solution (enlisting the help of the people to rebuild the wall).

IN PAIRS OR THREES

Pray together about the issues that are on your heart. Ask God for his wisdom to show you how to act.

Is there one thing you could do this week to move yourself towards action? (what skills/influence/resources do you have that you could use?) – Share in your pairs. It might be helpful to make a note so you can hold each other accountable.

How could you enlist the support of others to help tackle the problem? Share back any action points you agreed on or ideas you had with the group.

As a small group, is there a cause or issue locally that you could get behind? (e.g. volunteering together at Auckland City Mission, reading a book together on tackling racial injustice, financially supporting someone who is struggling) – Decide on something together

ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL

Read Nehemiah 5 together

- What emotion does Nehemiah feel, and what does he do about it?
- What challenges you or inspires you in this passage?
- What could you do to challenge inequality around you?

Discuss ideas as a group.

PRAYER

End by saying the Lord's prayer together – Why not stand up together as you pray or practice saying it in Te Reo?