

“Ownership”

Nehemiah 9 and 10

Week of November 5, 2023

Opening Question:

- Share a time you had to “own up” to a mistake or wrong-doing. Is it easy or hard for you to move on from an experience like that?

Pray this prayer (one person or the whole group together):

Lord, as we come together to study your Word, we bring all of who we are with our needs, our hopes and our expectations. Meet us here in the power and presence of your Holy Spirit. Give us insight and understanding as we listen carefully for your voice. And then give us courage and conviction to align our lives with the way of Jesus. We pray in his name. Amen.

Read aloud this introduction:

In Nehemiah chapter 8, we learned about Ezra’s reading of the Law and the remarkable response of the people to all that they heard. They responded with great joy and obedience as they understood what God had asked of them.

Following their seven-day celebration of the Feast of Booths, they gathered again in an assembly. This time, a different response was called forth from them. This time they came together fasting, and wearing sackcloth and putting dust on their heads. They confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors.

Read aloud Nehemiah 9:1-5

As a group or individually, work through the rest of this chapter. Make a list, answering the questions “What did God do?” and “What did the people do?”

What God did

What they did

Questions for Exploration:

- What elements of repetition do you see in these verses?
- What do you observe about who God is and how God does things?

Nehemiah chapter 10 details for us the promises the people make, in light of the confession of their sins in chapter 9. These commitments start with the leaders of the people, the Levites and priests and others who serve in the worship of God. It signals a fresh start as they promise to “follow the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God and to obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the Lord our God.” (Neh. 10:29)

Questions for Pressing it Out:

- What do you find comforting in these passages? What is troubling?
- How do you feel about making promises to God?
- What are the challenges in faithfully following God when those in leadership over us are not faithful?
- What corporate confessions would you like to see from the people of God in our day?
- Ponder for a moment whether there is anything in your life right now that could use a confession and a fresh start. Is there a way God would have you act on that?

Closing Prayer (pray together as a group or have one person lead):

Creator God, from the beginning of time, you have revealed yourself as the One who brings order out of chaos. You take what is broken and make it into something new and beautiful. Build and restore us, O Lord. Take the broken-down places of our lives and our world and build them up, not so we can hide behind walls of protection, but that from places of peace and safety, we can testify to your amazing grace and love that makes all things new.