

“Working Well Alongside Others In the Work of God (Nehemiah, Part 3)”

Text: Nehemiah 3:1-32

Nehemiah includes a lot of names in this chapter as he describes the work that was being done by different individuals and groups. Nehemiah was able to mobilize forty-four separate teams of people and describes the incredible teamwork and comradery that was present on this project. The fact that Nehemiah started at the Sheep Gate (where the sheep entered to be sacrificed as part of Temple worship) shows that **we must put God first**. It's important to work for God, but it's most important that our hearts and lives are devoted and dedicated to Him.

There are six principles in this chapter that will help each of us to *work well alongside others in the work of God*. The **first** one is that **leaders must set the example**. In 3:1 we see that the high priest pitched in to do his part. Leaders set the pace and go ahead of the people in the same way the people will go. **Secondly**, we should be encouraged by the fact that **God uses all kinds of people**. People from a wide variety of different backgrounds, trades and localities gathered to work on the wall (see 3:8). The rulers and priests worked together with regular people. There was a place for everyone and a job for everyone to do. No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. **Third**, resolve to **not be like the Tekoite nobles (who refused to exert themselves)**. While most of the people worked, some shirked their responsibility. We see in 3:5 that *the Tekoite nobles did not put their shoulders to the work of their Lord*. The wording of the text suggests they were too proud to follow the orders of people whom they felt superior to. **Fourth**, to work well alongside others in the work of God we should **strive to be like the Tekoites and the men of Binnui and Meshullam (who went above and beyond in the work of the Lord)**. In 3:5 we read that the men from Tekoa finished their section of the wall even though their nobles refused to help. In 3:27 we read that they pitched in to repair another section after their assignment was completed. The men of Binnui did the same thing (see 3:18, 24). Another guy named Meshullam completed one part (see 3:4) and then repaired an additional section (see 3:31). Don't just do the minimum and then stop. As long as there is work to be done in God's Kingdom keep moving on to *another section*. **Fifth**, we should all **work with passion**. Nehemiah 3:20 says that Baruch worked *carefully*, or thoroughly. He was earnest, eager, and fired up in his service and labor. In a crowd of diligent workers (see 4:6) Baruch stood out from the rest. What an example to always give our very best. **Sixth**, we are blessed to discover the joy of **working together for the Lord as families**. Some people worked as families, either on a section in front of their home, or on another section away from their neighborhood. We see in Nehemiah 3:3 that the Fish Gate was rebuilt by the *sons* of Hassenah, and in 3:12 the text states that Shallum's *daughters* helped their father make repairs.

One of the fascinating things about geese is that they normally fly in a V-formation. Geese often cover thousands of miles before reaching their destination, and they can only get to where they're headed if they work together. Here are some facts about their flight patterns: by flying as they

do the members of the flock create an upward air current for one another. By flying in a V-formation the whole flock gets 71% greater flying range than if each goose flew on its own. When one goose gets sick or wounded, two fall out of formation with it and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with the struggler until it's able to fly again. The geese in the rear of the formation are the ones who do the honking. It's their way of announcing that they're following and everything's going well. The repeated honks encourage those in front to stay at it.

Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. Have you found your place in Kingdom work, service or ministry?
2. Are you willing and available to do your part, and use the gifts the Holy Spirit has given to you with the power God supplies?
3. Don't ever refuse to work for your Lord.
4. In your joyful service for the Lord, be: earnest, zealous, diligent, thorough, careful, eager, passionate, and fired up; always give your very best.
5. How can you work alongside your children and/or grandchildren to minister to people in Jesus' name?