

Shaping our time together:

Follow the flow outlined by the images to shape the time you spend together.



What shines from the passage- something new or fresh?

What stuck out for you and what surprises were there?



Did these verses raise any questions as you read? (It might arise out of a word or verse, or a connection to another part of the Bible, or a particular theological point)



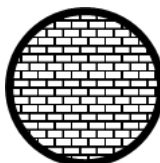
Where do we see something of Father, Son or Holy Spirit in these verses?



Personal Application. What is it telling you to do, commit to or challenges you for an obedient response?



What is there from the verses that you would want to share with someone, Christian, family member or none Christian?



Why are these verses in the Bible?
How do they fit into the Bible's big story?

The Plan:

Week 1: Beginning 8th January

Nehemiah 1: Prayer

Week 2: Beginning 22nd January

Nehemiah 2: Action

Week 3: Beginning 5th February

Nehemiah 3: Teamwork

Week 4: Beginning 19th February

Nehemiah 4: Opposition

Week 5: Beginning 5th March

Nehemiah 5: Compassion

Week 6: Beginning 19th March

Nehemiah 6:1-7:3: Focus and Finishing

Week 7: Beginning 23rd April

Nehemiah 7:4—8:18: Word

(Focus on 8:1-18)

Week 8: Beginning 7th May

Nehemiah 9:1-37: Confession

Week 9: Beginning 21st May

Nehemiah 9:38-12:47: Commitment and Celebration

(Focus on 10:28-39 and 12:27—46)

Week 10: Beginning 4th June

Nehemiah 13: Always reforming.

Before you come: Take 10 mins to *read* the passage for the week and *pray* for us to hear and respond to God's voice through the study.



Spring 2018

NEHEMIAH:

More than walls

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When you hear the name Nehemiah—what comes to mind?

Often we think about walls, as it was under his vision and leadership that the ruined walls of the city of Jerusalem were rebuilt. However, as we study the book of Nehemiah in Engage: Small Groups this spring we will see that the book is about much more than walls. Themes of leadership and teamwork, prayer and vision, action and opposition, strategy and sovereignty are all weaved into the story of this book.

SETTING THE SCENE:

Nehemiah is found in the Old Testament, immediately following the book of Ezra. In the Hebrew Bible these two books are considered one. Together they tell the story of God's people around 440 years before Jesus came to earth. At that time, God's people were in exile. They had been taken from their land, because they had not followed God's ways. The book of Ezra, narrates the story of the first people to return to the land of Israel, Ezra 1:1 tells us two reasons why they returned - because the King of Persia sent them back, and because God said they would come back. God is in control!

Under the leadership of Ezra, some people return and rebuild the temple. Worship of God again takes place in Jerusalem, but as we move into Nehemiah we discover the return is far from complete. A report reaches Nehemiah which says.

"Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

Nehemiah 1:3

Nehemiah is moved by what he hears, and responds with prayer, action, vision and leadership. As he does so—he rebuilds the walls and the community of God's people in Jerusalem and the land of Israel.

STRUCTURE:

The book splits into two parts:

PART 1: *Chapters 1:1-7:3*

Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem and the walls are rebuilt.

PART 2: *Chapters 7:4-13:31*

The exiles return and community is rebuilt.

You may find the overview of Ezra and Nehemiah by the Bible project helpful. Find it on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/MkETkRv9tG8>

THEMES:

GOD IS SOVEREIGN: He rules over all the earth. He cares for his people. As God is sovereign, Nehemiah prays.

GOD USES PEOPLE: Nehemiah, a godly leader, who has vision and wisdom. But it's not just Nehemiah—God uses everyone—each one plays their part under Nehemiah's leadership.

GOD USES HIS WORD: As the people hear and respond to God's word, community is rebuilt.

GOD'S WORK KEEPS ON GOING: In two senses— in the face of opposition; and there is always more to do.

RELEVANCE:

The four themes above are deeply relevant to our lives as individuals and together as God's church, in Chryston and Moodiesburn today.

Whilst there are many patterns and principals we can pick up from Nehemiah, we must do so knowing that he was not perfect. And the work he did, was not the final goal. As a leader, Nehemiah points us to the one true leader Jesus Christ. And all Nehemiah's work, prepares the way for Jesus to come.

So as you study Nehemiah, don't seek to be like him, rather look to Jesus, seek his strength, so God can use you, as he used Nehemiah.