

Nehemiah Prays,

Nehemiah chapter 1 and 2 verses 1-9

We are starting a new series in the book of Nehemiah. For some background information about Nehemiah see notes at the end of the study.

1. What are the things you are most passionate about?
2. Among God's top passions is the church – it's his big building project. That's why we've called this series God's Big Build. How do you feel about the church? (It helps to remember the Bible always describes the church as the people not the building).
3. Nehemiah is in exile far from home. His brother and others come back from home (1:2). He's keen to find out how the church is doing. What does he find (verse 3)?
4. What's his first response?
5. How do you respond when you hear of news of other Christians in 'great trouble and disgrace'? How might you feel more like Nehemiah?
6. Nehemiah also responds in prayer. Read through the prayer (verses 5-10).
What might this prayer help shape our prayers for the church?

7. Nehemiah avoids 2 possible dangers – only praying and only acting. In chapter 2 he bravely asks the Persian King for permission to go back to Judah. It was a dangerous thing to do. How does Nehemiah respond? Who is clearly behind the favourable response (verse 9)?

8. God has always been in the habit of doing great things when his people pray and act. What might it look like for you to do the same?

Notes on Nehemiah

For the October and November our six week sermon series will be in the book of Nehemiah as we discover what God is so passionate about building and learn how we can join in today.

Nehemiah is our man on the ground. He lived in the modern day Iran in around 450 BC (about 100 years into the exile of God's people). He believed that God would keep his promise to live with his people so he prayed, he built, he cared and he kept going in spite of opposition. Through Nehemiah's story, we get a real-life, sweat, tears, bricks and mortar glimpse of how brilliant God's church can be, as we see people from every walk of life joining in with God's build. As we follow the journey of God's people, we also see that people are a lot harder to repair than walls!

The aim of the series is that as a church we would see more clearly our unchanging God and his purposes both then and now, that we would see that God is still building today: not a city but his church. It will happen, it will last, and it will stand. Not because the people doing it are incredible builders but because it depends on Jesus.

The aim is that we would see that God wants us all to join in, and be excited to roll up our sleeves, and build his church here in our patch of Norfolk.

As you may have gathered the series will pick up on themes of trusting God's promises, of building (the church) and of relying in God's strength alone.

In each week we want to be thinking about what Nehemiah is experiencing in the story, how that relates to where we are today, and where we might face similar challenges and the lessons we can take for that.