



**KING'S  
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**EDINBURGH**

## 3. Get In God's Team

### Nehemiah 2:11-20

"I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days I set out during the night with a few others."

Your greatest achievements in life will be achieved through relationships with other people. Marriage, children, church, work, small groups, serving teams. God wants us to put a high value on every team we are a part of. Nehemiah's enemies only begin to take an interest when Nehemiah starts working with others to achieve his goal.

The Bible starts with a team (God the Father speaks creation into being through the Son by the power of the Spirit (Gen 1:1 and John 1:3):

"Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). The first people God puts together in team (Adam and Eve). When Jesus came he gathered a team of men and women. When he left there was a team of 11 senior leaders left.

The story of Nehemiah gives some insights into what makes for a healthy team.

### 1. Teams form where people make themselves available

Nehemiah invited a group of leading Jewish people to take a midnight walk with him shortly after he arrived in Jerusalem. They said yes!

- "Yes people": Beware of being so busy (through saying yes to everyone) that it is impossible for you to say yes to a God-given opportunity
- "No people": Beware of being hardened to saying yes to a God-given opportunity

through your default answers.

## 2. Teams are best motivated when everyone sees the same need

Nehemiah left his new team alone on the wall for a long time while he went for a walk by himself. Why? So that by the time he came back everyone had perceived the same problem as he wanted to talk about.

- Good team members don't just wait around for their boss/leader to give them tasks. They see what needs to be done and become motivated themselves.
- "Taking a walk" to expose ourselves to needs we don't normally see is an important part of God speaking to us and motivating us. It prevents us getting blinkered in our approach. Haggai 1:4 would indicate this is a perpetual need for us as God's people.
- In a bigger church we need to constantly see the bigger picture (a city where 460,000 don't go to church).

## 3. Teams achieve the most when they follow God-given leadership

Leaders break the stagnation. This wall had been broken for decades now. Nehemiah comes with faith and a plan to change it. A shepherd boy David brought leadership to a stagnated situation with Goliath.

When deciding whether to follow a person offering to provide leadership, good sense suggests:

- Leaders know how to follow (Nehemiah had been on King Antaxerxes team for years and had done a good job- credentials)
- Leaders should have a story to tell. Nehemiah "I used to work for a pagan king- he gave me leave and all the materials to do this job".
- You may not always see everything as they do. These were senior people; they had opinions. Yet they chose to defer to Nehemiah's gift.

## 4. Teams function best when they rally to the biggest needs, not just their own gifts

Some of the characters in chapter 3 tell us some things:

- Gifted people who miss out through unwillingness to be flexible. (3:7 “but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors.”)
- Gifted people who excel through showing flexibility and bigger vision.

"Uzziel son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired the next section; and Hananiah, one of the perfume-makers, made repairs next to that. They restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. Rephaiah son of Hur, ruler of a half-district of Jerusalem, repaired the next section."

"Whilst using our gifts is important, it's far more important to be motivated by the right thing. If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal." (1 Cor 13:1)

Therefore if there is no opportunity to use your gifts, simply give yourself to what's useful. There was a part of the wall called the Dung gate! Nobody is ever going to volunteer for that job!

Jesus didn't just do what he was good at (preaching, healing etc) but did what was necessary (dying for our sin).

## Questions:

### 1. Making ourselves available for God.

Do you find it hard to say no to things? Do you routinely say no to things?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach? How can we make sure we remain soft hearted in responding to need?

### 2. Taking a walk.

Can you think of a time when God spoke to you about something you normally wouldn't think about? How did that happen? What things help us to keep ourselves seeing the tasks God wants us to see?

### 3. Receiving leaders.

Nehemiah's team received him well. Some are more natural leaders and some better at implementing. Each is important. What can we learn about following leaders from Nehemiah's story?

### 4. Gifts vs. need.

Which is God giving you most opportunity for in your life right now- developing a gift you know you have, or fulfilling a need that requires you to persevere? Which have you grown most through?



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