

#2 Prayer First

Ready, Pray....Action!

A Study of the book of Nehemiah – Study Notes
Eastside Christian Fellowship: August 26, 2007

Notes:

Would you consider yourself to be a prayerful person? Explain.

Prayer is one of the overriding themes of the book and the secret to Nehemiah's success. Nehemiah prayed first and then took action. Look at the process he went through.

1. C _____ About the Problem. (1:1-4)

Nehemiah 1:1-4

These are the words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah:

It so happened that in the month of Kislev, in the twentieth year, I was in Susa the citadel.

2 *Hanani, who was one of my relatives, along with some of the men from Judah, came to me, and I asked them about the Jews who had escaped and had survived the exile, and about Jerusalem.*

3 *They said to me, "The remnant that remains from the exile there in the province are experiencing considerable adversity and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem lies breached, and its gates have been burned down!"*

4 *When I heard these things I sat down abruptly, crying and mourning for several days. I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.*

✍ What was the concern that Nehemiah had? Why was it such a big deal?

Nehemiah was broken over the complacency of the people of Jerusalem. They were living in ruins and they accepted it. They were willing to walk around the devastation instead of being concerned enough to do something about their situation. People have a tendency to get used to living in all the rubble in their lives. Things will not change or get better until we have a concern for the issue or problem.

✍ What are some of the issues you are facing in life that you are ignoring rather than facing with concern? Perhaps a time of prayer/fasting is in order.
What is Nehemiah's response to this overwhelming concern?

2. C _____ about God's Character.

1:5 *Then I said, "Please, O LORD God of heaven, great and awesome God, who keeps his loving covenant with those who love him and obey his commandments,*

✍ When you read this section, what do you learn about God?

✍ How did Nehemiah refer to God? Nehemiah realized God's concern for him and knew that God was willing to restore him and Jerusalem.

When you approach God in prayer, how do you address Him?

3. C _____ of sin.

After becoming concerned about the problem and expressing his conviction about God's character, Nehemiah is now moved to admit his sin and the sins of his people.

1:6 may your ear be attentive and your eyes be open to hear the prayer of your servant that I am praying to you today throughout both day and night on behalf of your servants the Israelites. I am confessing the sins of the Israelites that we have committed against you – both I myself and my family have sinned. 1:7 We have behaved corruptly against you, not obeying the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments that you commanded your servant Moses.

It's one thing to be concerned and to even have a firm conviction of who God is. It's another thing to actually confess.

- ✍ What was Nehemiah confessing to God?
- ✍ His confession was intense, honest and had a sense of urgency.
- ✍ Why do you think Nehemiah felt compelled to confess his sin? What would it do for him?

4. C _____ in God's Promises.

Although Nehemiah is broken in his confession, he own it and moves on in confidence in God's promises.

1:8 Please recall the word you commanded your servant Moses: 'If you act unfaithfully, I will scatter you among the nations. 1:9 But if you repent and obey my commandments and do them, then even if your dispersed people are in the most remote location, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen for my name to reside.' 1:10 They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your mighty strength and by your powerful hand.

Nehemiah's words are a collection of Old Testament warnings and promises.

- ✍ As a group, go through and discuss what the promises are and how they applied to Nehemiah's situation.

5. C _____ to get involved.

Nehemiah's concern led to his brokenness which led to prayer & fasting which brought about his conviction of the awesome nature of God. Being reminded of his own shortcomings, he cries out in confession, reminds himself of God's promises and then makes a commitment to get involved.

*1:11 Please, O Lord, listen attentively to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants who take pleasure in showing respect to your name. Grant your servant **success** today and show compassion to me in the presence of this man."*

Now I was cupbearer for the king.

Nehemiah didn't pray for God to send someone else he simply said, "Here am I, send me!"

He asked God for "success," which means "to break out or push forward."

- ✍ What is something that you want to ask God to go before you and break out in front of you?
- ✍ What are the passions of your heart that you have never pursued? Will you commit to spending time in prayer about them?

Martin Luther said, "Pray as if everything depends on God, then work as if everything depends on you."

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