

NEHEMIAH 2:1-8

A. Introduction

1. The things we should long for Banstead Community Church and for the community of Banstead are the same things that Nehemiah longed for Jerusalem.

That there would be a group of people who would love, worship, trust and obey Jesus.

That there would be a group of people who would show the watching world what it meant to follow Jesus.

That there would be a group of people who would grow as people from the community around are drawn to Jesus and believe in Him.

2. However, the book of Nehemiah begins with a community in a mess and God's people in trouble.

"They said to me, "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)

3. But Nehemiah's response teaches us that:

We need to be people who weep.

"When I heard these things, I sat down and wept." (Nehemiah 1:4)

We need to be people who pray.

"For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven." (Nehemiah 1:4)

4. In Nehemiah 2:1-8, we also see three other ways that he responded.

B. We need to be people who work faithfully

1. Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer.

"I was cupbearer to the king." (Nehemiah 1:11)

The job of cupbearer was an important role.

He was responsible for ensuring the king had the best wine money could buy.

He would run the winery and be responsible for the storage of the wine.

He was also responsible for tasting the wine to check that it wasn't poisoned.

2. Nehemiah was a good worker.

"In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him. I took the wine and gave it to the king." (Nehemiah 2:1)

He was faithful and hardworking in what he was called to do.

He did his job well.

3. Are we faithfully getting on with the things God has given us to do each day?

As husbands, fathers, workers, neighbours, local church members, elders?

C. We need to be people who take opportunities

1. He prays for his opportunity.

"Hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel." (Nehemiah 1:6)

2. He waits for his opportunity.

"In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him. I took the wine and gave it to the king." (Nehemiah 2:1)

3. He gets his opportunity.

"I had not been sad in his presence before; so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart." (Nehemiah 2:1-2)

4. He takes his opportunity.

Respectfully.

"I was very much afraid, but I said to the king, "May the king live for ever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" (Nehemiah 2:3)

Prayerfully.

The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven." (Nehemiah 2:4)

Boldly.

"And I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favour in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it." (Nehemiah 2:5)

5. Are we taking the opportunities God gives us to make a difference in the lives in His people and this community?

D. We need to be people who plan carefully

1. Nehemiah had given a lot of thought to what needed to happen in Jerusalem – he's done his research during the time he was praying.

He knew how long it would take.

"Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time." (Nehemiah 2:6)

He knew what was needed.

"I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide my safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" (Nehemiah 2:7-8)

2. We need to do the research and make plans and pray for them so that we are ready for when God opens the door and gives us opportunities in the church and community.

E. Application

1. What this church and this community needs are a group of men who weep, pray, work, take opportunities, and plan for them.

2. These are the people who the hand of God is upon.

“And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests.”
(Nehemiah 2:8)

Why?

Because there is something Jesus-like about us when we do these things!

3. These are the people who God provides for His people so they can remain faithful as they wait for Jesus to come.

Remember God’s people in the days of Nehemiah were waiting for Jesus to come, like we are today.