

NEHEMIAH 3:1-32

A. Introduction

1. Three reasons why Nehemiah is a relevant book for us to be spending time in at our elder's meetings:

It is a book about building a community of people who will reach the community around them.

It is a book about God's provision for His people as they wait for King Jesus to come.

It is a book that will be helpful for us as we think about as we approach 10 years since the formation of Banstead Community Church.

2. In Nehemiah 1-2 we see that God's provision for His people as they wait for King Jesus to come and which He gives to His people to build them up, so they will reach the community around them are elders of local churches.

In these two chapters we see that Jesus-like elders are those who weep, pray, work, take opportunities, plan, pause, investigate, lead and endure discouragement.

3. In Nehemiah 3 the building work on the city of Jerusalem begins.

The city today is the church.

This chapter is about how the church is built up in order that it can reach the community around them for the glory of God.

What do we see?

B. The building work will not be effective without the church leaders

1. Leaders who love.

In this chapter we have the list of people who were involved in the rebuilding work.

These names were recorded in Nehemiah's journal. Why?

These people mattered to God.

These people mattered to Nehemiah – he would have prayed for them, encouraged them, assigned jobs to them.

2. Leaders who set an example.

"Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests went to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set its doors in place, building as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and as far as the Tower of Hananel." (Nehemiah 3:1)

The high priest and the priests didn't often build gates and walls, but here we read of them getting stuck in and their hands dirty.

They led from the front, setting an example for the people.

3. Leaders who organise.

A building project of this size required organisation.

It involved giving certain groups (42 in all) certain parts of the wall, gate, or the city to work on.

Some groups were arranged by family, others by where the people were from, others by the jobs they did.

"The men of Jericho built the adjoining section, and Zaccur son of Imri built next to them."
(Nehemiah 3:2)

"Uzziel son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired the next section; and Hananiah, one of the perfumemakers, made repairs next to that. They restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall." (Nehemiah 3:8)

"Shallum son of Hallohesh, ruler of a half-district of Jerusalem, repaired the next section with the help of his daughters." (Nehemiah 3:12)

Nehemiah was a great organiser.

4. Application.

Do we love the people who make up Banstead Community Church? Are we praying for them? Are we seeking to encourage them?

Are we setting an example in service?

Can we see that part of our responsibility as elders is the work of organisation – different groups to build up the people, where people are known and loved, which are aiming to reach different parts of the community (the different gates into the city)?

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." (1 Peter 5:2-3)

C. The building work will not be effective without the church members

1. If the church is to be built up and disciples made everyone needs to be involved.

Almost all of God's people get behind the work – there is a role for everyone.

Some people will be able to do more work than others.

"Meremoth son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, repaired the next section." (Nehemiah 3:4)

"Next to him, Meremoth son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, repaired another section, from the entrance of Eliashib's house to the end of it." (Nehemiah 3:21)

Some people will be required to do the less desirable work.

"The Dung Gate was repaired by Malkijah son of Recab, ruler of the district of Beth Hakkerem. He rebuilt it and put its doors and bolts and bars in place." (Nehemiah 3:14)

2. If the church is to be built and disciples made everyone needs to work together.

They were building the city walls together – the little part they were responsible contributed to the larger wall.

This is seen in the repetition of the phrase – next to them, next section.

"Next to him..." (Nehemiah 3:4)

"The next section..." (Nehemiah 3:5)

They were united in purpose.

3. There will always be some who won't get involved.

“The next section was repaired by the men of Tekoa, but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors.” (Nehemiah 3:5)

Maybe they thought the work was beneath them.

Maybe they wanted a more glamorous part of the wall.

Maybe they refused to work under someone else’s leadership.

Maybe they were plain lazy.

Sadly there will always be those who refuse to serve.

4. Application.

We need to be encouraging everyone who is part of Banstead Community Church to get involved in some way by using the gifts they have been given. Sometimes though there will be work that just needs to be done.

We need to be reminding people that the aim of this building work is to glorify God by making disciples of all nations.

We mustn’t be surprised or discouraged when there are some in the church who will not get behind this work.