

Nehemiah – Building the Future, Part 3

The book of Nehemiah is not just about rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem – it is about building a **FUTURE** for God’s people! Jerusalem looked like New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina – the city was destroyed and the people were scattered and demoralized. As we proceed through Nehemiah’s 2500-year-old journal, we find that in only 52 days, 42 different working parties restored a 50 foot high wall with a circumference of 4 miles at a rate of 504 feet per day – all the while fighting opposition. How did they accomplish in only 52 days what no one had been able to do in 140 years?! **THEY PRAYED, YES ... BUT THEY ALSO ACTED!**

Chapter three is a listing of every group that helped build the walls of Jerusalem, and it teaches us several important principles ...

1. **The pastors are to set the example, but not to do it all alone.**

Nehemiah 3:1 Then Eliashib the **high priest** rose up with his brethren **the priests**, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel.

2. **It takes unity (working next to each other) to build the church.**

Nehemiah 3:2 And **next unto him** builded the men of Jericho. And **next to them** builded Zaccur the son of Imri.

3. **Unity doesn’t necessarily mean that everyone is going to help.**

Nehemiah 3:5 And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles **put not their necks to the work** of their Lord.

4. **Some jobs required to build the church are not very glamorous.**

Nehemiah 3:14 But the **dung gate** repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Bethhaccerem; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

5. **We need to build our homes while we are building the church.**

Nehemiah 3:28 From above the horse gate repaired the priests, **every one over against his house.**

6. **We already have all the material we need to do the job!**

BUILT (“rebuilt”) – 7X in chapter 3, **REPAIRED** – 35X in chapter 3

7. **God sees all that we do for His church and records our names!**

Malachi 3:16-17 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Hebrews 6:10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

UNITY IS A CRITICAL PART OF GOD’S PATTERN FOR HIS CHURCH!
UNITY MEANS THAT WE WORK AS A TEAM!

ONE ACCORD (HOMOTHUMADON) – This unique Greek word (6X in Acts) helps us understand the uniqueness of the Christian community. It is a compound of two words meaning to “rush along” and “in unison”. The image is a musical one – a number of notes are sounded which, while different, harmonize in pitch and tone. Like the instruments of a concert under the direction of a concertmaster, so the Holy Spirit blends together the lives of members of Christ’s church to accomplish His purpose.

Acts 6:1-4 (KJV) ¹And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. ²Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. ³Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. ⁴But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

MURMUR – “to mutter, or grumble, in a low undertone”

Paul says to the saints, “Neither murmur ye!” (1 Corinthians 10:10) and “Do all things without murmuring!” (Philippians 2:14)

The problem was not that the pastors weren’t doing their job; it was that there was too much work for the pastors to do alone!

God’s solution was to appoint **DEACONS** (“diakonas” = “a servant, one called to serve, to wait on, or an attendant”). These men were to be of honest report (having a good testimony inside and outside the church), to be full of the Holy Ghost (having a real relationship with God), and to be full of wisdom (having the necessary skills for the job). The word “deacon” does not refer to a POSITION, but to a MINISTRY ROLE.

Ephesians 4:11-13 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For (**“so that”**) the perfecting of the saints, for (**“so that”**) the work of the ministry, for (**“so that”**) the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

This is not a three-fold job description of the five-fold ministry, but rather God’s plan for **TEAM MINISTRY!**

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 ¹² For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵ If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶ And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? ¹⁸ But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. ¹⁹ And if they were all one member, where were the body? ²⁰ But now are they many members, yet but one body. ²¹ And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. ²² Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary. ²³ And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. ²⁴ For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: ²⁵ That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. ²⁶ And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷ Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

PAUL’S SPIRITUAL ANATOMY LESSON

- 1. Each member of the Body of Christ has a ministry.**
- 2. Each member has a unique function in the Body.**
- 3. Each member’s ministry is important to the Body.**
- 4. Each member cooperates with all the other members.**