

Join The Team

Taken from Nehemiah 2-4

Foundation

Stop and pray. Don't go any further until you've dedicated this time to the Lord. Ask God to help you better understand how He uses people working together to accomplish great things.



Do you find it difficult to work with other people?

Carefully Nehemiah picked his way around the ruins of the city walls, closely examining the task that awaited him. Only the moon lit the path before him as he set out on his mule with a few trusted men.

I must see what I'm up against and draft a plan before I tell others why I'm here, Nehemiah thought.

During his three days in Jerusalem, he had mentioned to no one the reason he had come. He did this in order to avoid unhealthy gossip and any enemies. Until Nehemiah could see the damage to be repaired, he would keep the purpose of his arrival a secret. The darkness of the night provided him the greatest opportunity to view the walls without suspicion.

Quietly, Nehemiah rode his mule out the Valley Gate, past the Jackal Well, and over to the Dung Gate. By starting at the southwest corner, he made his way around the wall, traveling in a clockwise direction. However, when he got to the Fountain Gate and the Kings' Pool, there wasn't enough room to pass because of

the rubble that blocked his way. Seeing this, Nehemiah turned and went through the valley in order to complete his inspection of the city walls. Upon finishing, he and his trusted companions quietly reentered the city through the original gate they had left from. *The task is enormous, Nehemiah thought to himself, but if we work together, it can be accomplished—with God’s help.* He had seen what needed to be done; now it was time to get to work. Nehemiah called a meeting.

“You see the challenging task we’re facing,” Nehemiah declared to the priests, officials, and people living in the city. “The walls of Jerusalem have been knocked down and the wooden gates were destroyed by fire.”

The people nodded their heads at the sorry state Jerusalem was in. Without walls for protection, they knew they would be easy targets for an enemy attack. The rubble that lay about them only served as a shameful testimony to all they had lost because of their disobedience to God.

“It’s time to pull together to bring Jerusalem back to its proper state,” Nehemiah announced, “No more should the city be an embarrassment to its people.” *This is a time of new beginnings,* Nehemiah said to himself. *We must begin now.*

The people looked up at Nehemiah with hope and concern. *Doesn’t Nehemiah know we tried to rebuild in the past—only to have everything halted because of a royal decree?* some wondered in their hearts. *How can we build when the king has forbidden us?*

Nehemiah could see the fear reflected in their faces. He then told them of his conversation with the king and everything God had wonderfully provided. When the people heard this, their hearts rejoiced.

“Let’s rebuild the wall!” they cheered, and listened for further instruction from Nehemiah.

City gates were more than just doors to keep out the enemy. They were wider portions of the wall housing built-in rooms where official city business was done. The area outside the gate often became a marketplace.

Wisely, Nehemiah involved everyone and assigned each group a portion of the wall to work on. Many were near their own homes or places of business. On the north wall, Eliashib the High Priest and other priests repaired and dedicated the Sheep Gate. They also worked on the towers that lay between that gate and another. Work on the other walls was done in sections by various people. Everyone joined in and worked together. Be they perfume makers, goldsmiths, or officials, all worked wholeheartedly to accomplish the task at hand. The Israelites were a team, and they were accomplishing much.

All around the city—north, south, east, and west—the walls of Jerusalem were being restored. It wasn't long, however, before trouble came from some local Samaritans. They were angry about the work being done on the walls and would do all they could to stop it—just as they had successfully done in the past. The leader of this opposition was an official named Sanballat. When he saw the wall restored to half its original height, he became hostile. He and his two companions, Tobiah the Ammonite and Geshem the Arab, stopped their mocking of the Israelites and started seriously threatening. Sanballat would attack the workers when they weren't looking and destroy their team efforts. At least that's what he *thought* he would do!

Footwork

What happened to the project? Was Sanballat successful in his attempts? Quickly turn to Nehemiah 4 and read verses 8-9 to find out. Do you think this was the end of their troubles? Read on! Notice what happens in verses 10-18!

Fruit

It has been said, “There is no letter *I* in the word *Team*.”

Getting along with other people and doing work alongside them isn't always an easy thing to do—but it's the best thing. When we cooperate with others, we gain a sense of perspective and see that life doesn't just revolve around ourselves and our own ideas. The Israelites needed each other to do the job God had given them to do. At one point, their very lives depended upon it! It is no different for us. God has a job for each of us to do, and more often than not, it will involve working with others. Watch out for prideful attitudes that whisper, “I don't need anybody else.” They are lies.