

Nehemiah—Building for the Future

STUDY 3

Teamwork

Nehemiah Chapter 3

Introduction

Jerusalem was considered a large city, and because many roads converged there, it required many gates. The wall on each side of these heavy wooden gates was taller and thicker so soldiers could stand guard to defend the gates against attack. Sometimes two stone towers guarded the gate. In times of peace, the city gates were hubs of activity – city council was held there, and shop keepers set up their wares at the entrance. Building the city walls and gates was not only a military priority, but a boost for trade and commerce and would help establish the nation as a worshipping community.

During the following study not every verse will be referenced as the chapter is quite long; approximately the same length as the previous two chapters combined.

Opening Discussion Questions

Share a positive or negative memory concerning working with a team.

What made it good?

What made it difficult?

As a group, read Nehemiah 3:1-16

1. In Nehemiah 3:1a we read “Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests went to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate.” The first people mentioned to commence work were the nation’s spiritual leaders. Why is it important that spiritual leaders set the example of teamwork?

The first gate to be mentioned that work commenced upon, was the sheep gate. However, this was not a gate for the farmers to bring in their herds to sell in Jerusalem. Rather it was an entrance for the perfect lambs without blemish to be taken for sacrifice. This gate was positioned near the temple. It was clear that Nehemiah was making sure worship to God was a priority. (The Message of Nehemiah, The Bible Speaks Today series. Raymond Brown. Inter-Varsity Press. Page 64. Copyright 1998.)

2. Read Nehemiah 3:1. When worship is given a priority do you think teams function better? Why?

1. Consider Nehemiah 3:5 & 9. Both references mention rulers or nobles, but their attitudes were quite different. Why do you think the Nobles of Tekoa wouldn't work?

3a. We do not see Nehemiah insisting that the nobles of Tekoa do the work. What do we learn from Nehemiah here?

2. Survey Nehemiah 3:2, 7, 13, 14, 16, & 18. Make a list of the places people came from.

Many volunteers came from towns or districts outside of the walls of Jerusalem. They had their own fields to cultivate, livestock to protect, farms, workshops or trades to be maintained. It was of little direct or immediate benefit to them if the walls of Jerusalem were repaired. (The Message of Nehemiah, The Bible Speaks Today series. Raymond Brown. Inter-Varsity Press. Page 66. Copyright 1998.)

4a. What do we learn from the attitude of those who travelled to labour on the walls of Jerusalem?

5. Read Nehemiah 3:8. Hananiah was in the profession of making perfume. He would not have been used to roughing up his hands on bricks. Building a wall was not in keeping with his gifts. Does effective teamwork often require people to operate outside their area of gifting? Why?

5a. Is there an area of ministry that requires more volunteers at your local church? What are those ministries?

5b. Do you feel you need to be gifted in those areas before you would get involved? Why?

6. Read Nehemiah 3:12. Do you think where possible it is good to involve family members in the same ministry team? Why?

6a. Can you think of examples in your local church of families that do this?

Dung Gate - "Sha'ar Ashpoth" is the Hebrew name for dung gate, which literally means 'Gate of Garbage'. When the first temple still existed in Jerusalem, all the garbage and ash from the sacrifices were taken out through this gate; it was also used for the removal of general waste from the city. It was located at the southernmost part of the wall of Jerusalem and therefore the furthest gate from the temple, which was in the north of the walled city.

7. Read Nehemiah 3:14. Repairing the dung gate was the least prestigious work to be involved in. What do we learn from Malkijah about teamwork?

8. Consider Nehemiah 3:20. Do you think zeal or enthusiasm helps build an effective team? Why?

9. Reflect upon Nehemiah 3:23, 28 & 30. Why did Nehemiah organise many of the people to reconstruct the walls of Jerusalem near where they lived?

In summary, we have learnt:

- A. Spiritual leaders should set the example of teamwork (Neh. 3:1a).
- B. When worship is given priority, teams function better (Neh. 3:1).
- C. Effective team leaders have realistic expectations (Neh. 3:5).
- D. Good teamwork may require people to operate outside of their area of gifting (Neh. 3:8).
- E. Where possible, involve family as a part of your team (Neh. 3:12).
- F. Humility makes a great team player (Neh. 3:14).
- G. Enthusiasm builds team energy (Neh. 3:20).

In a final time of prayer, consider one or two of the teamwork principles you would like the Holy Spirit to develop more in your life.

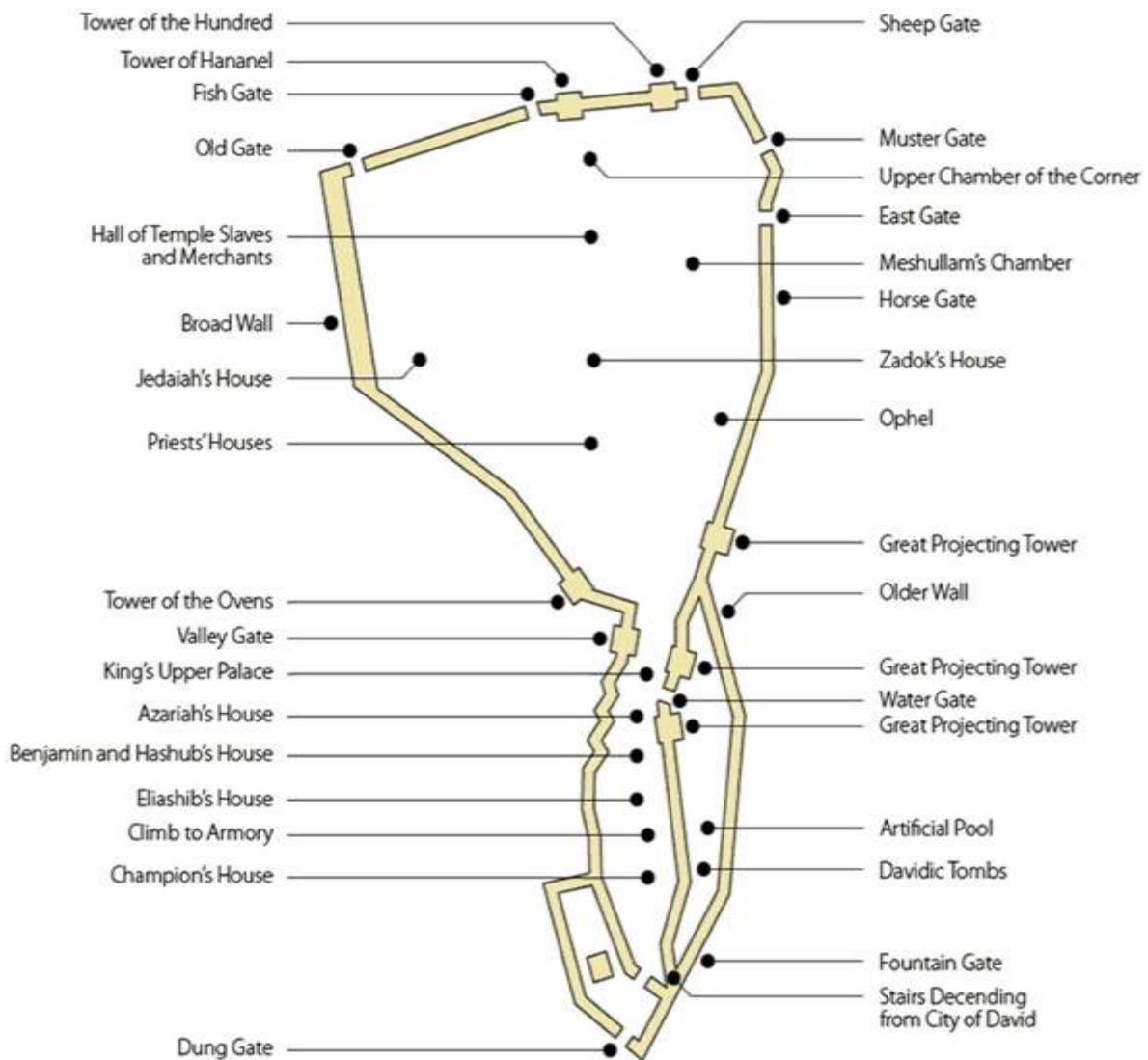
Ask the Lord to raise up volunteers for the various ministries in your church.

Does your church have a list of team ministries that you could be involved in?

Would you be willing to prayerfully consider becoming a team player and joining a ministry group?

Is there a team leader you should talk to about this next Sunday?

Jerusalem's Wall in Nehemiah's Day



Study Notes: