

## Nehemiah 3

**MAIN POINT: Great things can be accomplished by a group of people moving together toward a God-inspired goal.**

[LEADER NOTE #1: This group meeting will require five slips of paper or 3x5 cards and one pen or pencil for each person.]

[LEADER NOTE #2: The main goal of this discussion is to explore the skills, interests, and gifts of your group members and think of how those can be exercised in and through the church. Depending on how much time you think this will take, you may wish to skip the Bible study questions in the “Reading Nehemiah” section (even though there are some pretty good thought-provoking Bible study questions 😊 ).

### **Introduction:**

Ask your group members to take turns describing some team-based accomplishment they have participated in (sports team, construction project, drama production, event planning, etc.) Use any or all of the questions below to draw out the details:

- **What is your favorite memory of some team-based accomplishment you were part of?**
- **What was the nature of the activity?**
- **What was the goal of your efforts?**
- **Who were the people you remember on the team?**
- **What was your role?**
- **What in particular made it feel so fulfilling?**
- **Would you do it (or something similar) again, if you had the opportunity?**

### **Reading Nehemiah**

Ask a volunteer to read Nehemiah 3:1-5, and then ask the group to respond to these questions:

- **Notice who leads off the list of wall builders. What do you think it meant to the other people to have their spiritual leaders working with them?**
- **Have you ever seen that quality in your spiritual leaders? What is one example of their leadership alongside the people?**
- **What do you make of the report in verse 5 about the nobles of Tekoa? What dynamic was going on there, do you think?**
- **Have you worked alongside people who want the benefits of a project without working for it (no names)? How about in a faith community? How did you deal with that situation?**

Now ask the group to scan the entire chapter 3 and make a list of the various professional groups or classes that contributed to the building of the wall.

[LEADER NOTE #3: In case your group needs a little help, here is a list you can use to prompt them: Priests, Levites, Temple servants, nobles of Tekoa, goldsmiths, perfume makers, merchants, district rulers.]

After your group has listed all of Nehemiah's work groups, ask them to respond to these questions:

- **Did you notice that there is no mention of construction workers such as stonemasons, carpenters, or iron workers? But there are three groups mentioned that are tied to the function of the Temple. Why would priests, Levites, and temple servants be so invested in rebuilding the city walls?**
- **How might goldsmiths and perfume makers also be connected to the Temple worship?**
- **The Temple was a sign of God's presence. For Christians today, what is the sign of God's presence in the world?**

### **Working Beside Each Other**

Read or remind the group of Emmaus Road's Mission: To Present Christ as Savior, Pursue Christ as King, Partner with Christ in service.

Then read the following thumbnail descriptions of what those three missions might mean:

*Present Christ as Savior:* We want to make sure we are Christ-centered in all we do, and as a result have people come to faith who need the hope of Jesus. We want to help people—children, teens, and adults—meet Jesus.

*Pursue Christ as King:* We want to help people pursue life in the kingdom of God through worship, and encourage people of all ages to grow in their faith and help them get connected to others who can encourage and challenge.

*Partner with Christ in service:* To show the love of God in practical ways around our city and around the world. The love of God is understood best when it is proclaimed AND demonstrated. We want to put compassion into practice by serving others in the name of Jesus.

Next, divide your group into three smaller groups and give each group a full sheet of paper. Assign one group to be the *Present Christ as Savior* group, one group to be the *Pursue Christ as King* group, and the other group to be the *Partner with Christ in service* group. Give the three groups three minutes to write on their sheet of paper the skills, tasks, or activities that help accomplish each of those missions.

After three minutes, give each person five slips of paper or 3x5 cards and a pen/pencil. Ask each person to mark a corner of their cards with their month and date of birth. Then ask them to write on one of the cards/slips the area of their education or training. On another card, ask them to write a description of the area or field in which they have work experience (this may or may not be the same as their education or training).

On the three remaining cards, ask everyone to write a description of their hobbies, interests, passions—one per card.

When everyone has finished writing, place all the cards/slips into a bowl or basket and mix them up. Then, without revealing who wrote what card, draw one card and read it aloud and try to match that to one of the three church mission sheets. Let the group decide what card matches which ministry skill or task.

Do this until all the cards have been drawn and matched to some aspect of the church's mission. Then let people reveal which cards are theirs.

Spend the rest of the group time talking about possible ministry roles and helping each other discern if and how they can contribute to Emmaus Road can be an expression of God's presence in Ft. Collins and in the world.

**Prayer:** Spend some time by praying for each other's area of ministry (or potential ministry) based on your discussion. Then pray this prayer aloud in closing:

O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Savior, the Prince of Peace: Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions; take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatever else may hinder us from godly union and concord; that, as there is but one Body and one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.