

Nehemiah – Leadership Principles

Lesson 2 - Prayer

Class Study

Nehemiah was a man of prayer. The following texts teach us about prayer and being a leader.

1. Verses 1:5-11:
 - a. Review the setting for these verses (verses 1-4). Why would this situation suggest a sense of urgency for prayer?
 - b. This is the longest of Nehemiah's prayers. Why this length appropriate?
 - c. Verse 1:5 – What element of prayer can be found in verse 5?
 - d. Verse 1:6 – “be attentive.” Why can Nehemiah be confident of his request in this verse? Can you think of some Bible passages that support that kind of confidence?
 - e. Verse 1:6 – “day and night.” What Bible passage supports this thought? How can this be done?
 - f. Verse 1:6 – “for your...” What element of prayer does this point to?
 - g. Verse 1:6 – “I confess...” What element of prayer does this point to?
 - h. Verse 1:7 – What is Nehemiah doing in this verse?
 - i. Verse 8-9 – What is Nehemiah doing in these verses?
 - j. Verse 10 – What is Nehemiah doing in this verse? What other Bible leader(s) did this as well?
 - k. Verse 11 – What is Nehemiah implying about his and Israel's status?
 - l. Verse 11 – “Give...success...” Why can he confidently ask this?
 - m. Write one or several sentences about what you have learned in this section and when you have or might pray a prayer similar to this. (Sharing optional)

2. 2:4:

Nehemiah was a high-ranking official in the Persian government. He was the king's cupbearer (1:11). As such he was not a mere household servant, but he had a status equal to that of a member of the cabinet in our government. Presenting the king's cup and protecting him against poisoning were a ceremonial part of the Nehemiah's job, but he was also a trusted and influential advisor to the king.

No matter what one's personal problems were, the king's servants were expected to keep their feelings to themselves and to display a cheerful disposition before him.

- a. Explain the urgency for prayer in this setting.
- b. How is this very short prayer a great example?
- c. If or when have you been in a similar situation? (Sharing optional)
- d. Is there is possible setting coming up when you might be mindful of this type of prayer? (Sharing optional)

3. 4:4-5

- a. This is a bit like the Imprecatory or Curse Psalms. Imprecatory psalms often contain curses that are often shocking to modern readers, but such prayers are in accordance with God's curse against sin. The Imprecatory psalms put the psalmist squarely on the side of God who hates injustice and who does indeed rescue His abused children. While we leave vengeance to the Lord, and while we yearn for the ungodly to turn from sin to the Savior, we still hate wickedness and evil. To which petition of the Lord's Prayer does this relate? Why is it alright for a Christian to pray a prayer like this?
- b. Read the following verses: Matthew 16:13-28 especially 16-19, 22-23; Ephesians 4:26-27; Ezekiel 33:11; 1 Timothy 2:4; and Matthew 5:43-44. How do these various passages help explain the prayer in verses 4-5 and the Imprecatory psalms?
- c. Can you think of situations where people might want to pray like this?
- d. What have been or might be situations when you might want to pray like this?

4. 4:9
 - a. Why is this a good prayer?
 - b. What might be something similar in your life?
5. 5:19
 - a. What do you think Nehemiah meant by this prayer?
 - b. Why is this an okay prayer?
6. 6:9b
 - a. "...strengthen my hands" Scan verses 1-9 to get the setting. How must Nehemiah been feeling by now?
 - b. Under what circumstances might it be good for you to pray a prayer like this?
7. This section has been a study of the prayer life of a leader. The purpose of study is usually to learn something. Serious learning often leads to change. Keeping this line of thought in mind give some thought to the following personal study questions: (Note that is for your personal life only.)
 - a. How is my prayer life at this time? (consider when, where and how you spend time praying)
 - b. What will I change in my prayer life?
 - c. How will I make sure that I will follow through?