

RISE UP

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Nehemiah: Praying for Restoration

Nehemiah 1.1-11

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Share plans for future Community Group gatherings and the following happening in the life of the church:

- **New City Guys' Game Night | Friday, February 9th 7p** Gentlemen...come on out to the church building for games. If you've got a favorite game feel free to bring it though some of our resident game masters will bring some favorites. Also bring drinks (soda, beer, etc.) and a snack to share. Feel free to bring friends.
- **Ash Wednesday Worship Gathering | Wednesday, February 14th 7p** Ash Wednesday begins the 40 day season of Lent which is to be a season of reflection and preparation for the death and resurrection of Jesus. Join us as we gather to worship together. Children are more than welcome to participate in worship but if needed RSVP for childcare on the City.

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group in prayer. Pray extemporaneously, or use this prayer: *Father, as we continue learning about prayer in this new year, teach us to pray. Use our time together toward that end tonight. In Jesus's name, we pray.*

OPENER

If you can spend a vacation in any city in the world, which one would you visit? Which city will you live in?

STUDY/DISCUSSION

There seems to be a universal human instinct for prayer: to connect with the divine realm. Almost everyone prays, and yet almost everyone has questions about prayer. To start the new year, we're looking at prayer through a series of case studies: Old testament stories of people encountering God in prayer. Exodus 2.23 says that when God's people cried out to him, their prayers "rose up" to God and he heard them.

1. Please read **Nehemiah 1** and ask your group to reflect on anything that stood out to you from the passage or from the sermon.
2. Have you ever experienced the end of an entity (i.e. the end of a company, an organization, a church, a nation), how did that experience make you feel? Was there any shame that the people shared in this process?

3. Consider Nehemiah's interests in Jerusalem and his reaction to his brother's report, what does it look like to care about a city?
4. What events in the past have made you react so strongly about our city?
5. What were some problems that Nehemiah had to confront about Jerusalem? What are some of the problems that we need to confront in Cincinnati to bring about restoration?
6. In vv. 8-9, Nehemiah quotes Deuteronomy 4 and Deuteronomy 30 to express his faith in God's promises. Read Deuteronomy 4:25-27 and Deuteronomy 30: 1-5, why would these passages give Nehemiah any hope?
7. What is the nature of a covenant that makes it different from a contract? Have you lived in a covenantal relationship before?
8. What are some promises that you usually point to as your pray to God? Share with one another some of the promises in the Bible that have been especially meaningful to you.
9. In vv. 6-7, Nehemiah confesses his own sins and the sins of his people, why do you think it is appropriate to confess the sins of other people on their behalf?
10. What are some of the things that you would like to see restore around you? Please spend some time praying for them together.

PRAYER:

End your community group time in prayer. You may elect to just lead the group in a closing prayer, pray together as a large group, or break into smaller groups to pray. You can share requests, or simply pray about the things you discussed tonight.