

Let's build God's city in our city
August 14, 2011

Dedication and sacrifice
Nehemiah 12:27-47



City life: crowds of people, traffic congestion, asphalt and concrete, schools, government, culture, community . . . All of us know what it's like to live in a city. But did you know that God is in the process of building a city of his own right in the midst of our city? Although the story of the Bible starts in the garden (Gen. 1-2), it ends in a city (Rev. 21). And in between God invites us to join him in building his city right where we live. How do we do this? What does this look like? How do we deal with opposition? These are just some of the questions we are going to answer as we dig into the book of Nehemiah. I hope you are ready to let God use you to build his city in our city!

Discussion Questions: (Leaders please review each question and pick those that will be most beneficial for your group.)

1. Read Nehemiah 12:27-47. In this passage we learn that worship is the only acceptable response to God's great mercy. Worship is defined as living your life as a dedicated, living sacrifice to the glory of a person or thing (Romans 12:1). We were created for worship. Yet, worship becomes idolatry when we dedicate and sacrifice for the glory of anything or anyone other than the Lord (Romans 1:25). What idol(s) do you worship?

2. In Nehemiah God shows great mercy to his people. Rather than wipe them out, the Lord calls these idol worshippers back to himself: he rebuilds his city, revives his people and restores fellowship with them. Now in Nehemiah 12:27-47 God's people express their dedication to the Lord through joyful praise and thanksgiving in response to his great mercy (vv.27-28, 31, 38, 40 & 43). How would you describe the character of your celebration of the Lord in our worship gathering and throughout the week?

3. Next, God's people show their dedication to the glory of the Lord by purifying/consecrating themselves (v.30 & v.45). To consecrate means to set apart for the Lord. What has the Lord given you that you have consecrated to him? What have you not consecrated to him? What keeps you from doing this?

4. Worship also involves making great sacrifices to the glory of the Lord. Specifically, in v.43 and vv.44-47 we see God's people make great sacrifices to support the work of God. What great sacrifices (time, talent, treasure) are you making to support the work of God in and through Pathway?

5. C.S. Lewis, in his book The Weight of Glory says "We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." What idol(s) do you need to confess and repent of today to worship the Lord for his great mercy shown to us through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?