

Going Deeper

Your weekly guide to understanding God with others

Nehemiah - Part 3 The cry of a generation

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Introduction

In Nehemiah 5 we find distress within the walls of Jerusalem. As Nehemiah and his associates are rebuilding the walls, they hear the cry of injustice from the community within the walls who were being oppressed and exploited by fellow Jews. When Nehemiah hears about this, he seeks to correct the situation and stop the injustice. How might we, as individuals and as a church, be sensitive to internal injustice within our own community?

Read Nehemiah 5:1-12 (NIV)

Discuss

1. Read verses 1-5. What stands out to you in this passage? If these words were written today about our church community, what do you think the outcry (or desperate needs) would be? What could be done to address these issues?
2. Read verses 4-5 again. The people cried not only because of their suffering, but also because it was caused by those of the same flesh and blood. What does this tell us about injustice? Where have you witnessed this happening today?
3. Read verses 6-9. Nehemiah addresses further the injustice within the community at Jerusalem. What was the issue? Why was this causing such difficulty for the people?
4. In verse 6, Nehemiah is angry and calls for a communal response to the problems. As a church family, how can our passion for Christ be expressed to support and uplift members of the family? How can our church address the various challenges faced by our people, especially loneliness and the sense of 'worth'?

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5. Verse 9 emphasizes the importance of walking in the fear of God. Why did Nehemiah focus upon this as a solution to their problem? What does it mean to you to fear God, in relation to helping those in need?
6. Read verses 10-12. Nehemiah and his associates choose to stop charging interest and give back what was taken. As a church community, in what practical ways can we contribute to the well-being and development of those who are struggling financially? What personal sacrifice could we make to enable this?

Respond

We are called to be a church that acts like a family, supporting and encouraging one another. As a personal challenge, think about one specific action you can take to build better relationships within our church, especially with those who may be in a difficult space spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally, or through life circumstances. It could be reaching out to someone you have not spoken to in a while, volunteering for youth activities, or simply being more intentional in your conversations. What is one small but practical step you can take to foster justice and compassion within our community?