



NEHEMIAH

FULFILLING YOUR PART IN GOD'S STORY

Series Facilitator Guide

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR THIS STUDY:

SEVEN ESSENTIALS:

1. YOUR BIBLE

This is the only real essential for this study. The whole purpose of the study is to get everyone reading and applying the Bible to their lives on a daily basis. This is a great series to emphasize everyone in the group having a Bible that they use for their personal reading and study and bring to the group. As you begin this study it may be an opportunity to help some group members select and purchase a Bible that they will use for many years to come. (See the notes on study Bibles in the Bible Commentary section). We have broken the reading of Nehemiah into seven weekly sections for the study but the Scriptures are not printed in the book. We want people opening up their Bibles (or Bible apps) and using the workbook as a guide and journal as they read and study.

2. SOAP BIBLE STUDY METHOD

The Bible is God's Word. In Hebrews 4:12 we read.... For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword... God has given us the Bible so that our lives would be transformed by the Holy Spirit. However, when we are new to studying the Bible we can be intimidated, confused and unsure what to do. And when we have been reading and studying the Bible for a long time there are times when it can seem stale or repetitive, and no longer seems to have an impact on our daily lives. The SOAP Method is a simple but profound tool that can help each of us to read and apply God's living word to our lives.

3. WORKBOOKS

This Nehemiah workbook is much simpler than the Philippians or James studies. We have designed it to guide group members to do daily reading and SOAP study (5 days each week). Space is given to journal applications and discoveries from each day.

4. GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDES

We have not included the group components into the workbook for this study. Instead weekly facilitator guides will provide discussion questions for each group meeting. Group members should bring their workbooks each week to be able to share their applications and discoveries from their personal reading and study time.

5. UNDERSTANDING NEHEMIAH MATERIAL

We have provided an “Understanding Nehemiah” section on page 5 of the workbook to give important background information to help everyone grow in their understanding. We were not able to include a weekly “Understanding Nehemiah” section in the workbook for this study. We will try to provide facilitators some additional material throughout the study. See the section on Bible Commentaries for suggestions to access or purchase material to have for your own study and preparation.

6. SERMONS

Throughout the series there will be sermons from the book of Nehemiah at all Purpose Church campuses. These sermons will help everyone grow in their understanding and application of Nehemiah. The group discussion questions will be based on the reading but will be enhanced by the questions and insights from the sermons that are brought into the group time. Encourage group members to bring sermon notes to your group time to share. You and your group members can access the sermons at PurposeChurch.com/sermons.

7. INTENTIONAL LIFE GROUP BUILDING

Whether you are a new group forming for this series or a group that has been together for many years we will provide recommendations and reminders of best practices that will help you be intentional about growing stronger as a group through this series. In addition to the discussion questions, this guide will provide practical suggestions to use with your group throughout the series. If you are a new life group forming for this study we also have a Life Group video for you to watch as a group to help you build a strong healthy foundation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

SOAP STUDY VIDEO

If this is the first time using the SOAP study method for you, your group, or a new group member, we have produced a video featuring Pastor Glenn, Pastor Brian that walks you through how to use the SOAP method with a passage. If the whole group is new to SOAP, use the video in your first meeting. If only a few are new to it you can refer those members to the video. The video can be accessed from any device at purposechurch.com/soap. If you need a DVD to show your group we can provide one for you.

SUGGESTED BIBLE COMMENTARIES

These are not necessary for this series. And your role as a facilitator is not to teach the group. But if you are interested in resources to help you gain background information and understanding as you study there are many great options. Here are few suggestions to consider:

Purchase a Study Bible

There are many great Study Bibles available today that provide introductions to each of the books of the Bible and helpful background information and commentary on each page of the Bible. The NIV Life Application Study Bible is a great option with the same translation that Pastor Glenn uses for his sermons.

Online Resources

- <http://biblegateway.com>
- <https://www.studylight.org>
- Matthew-Henry's is not recommended. It has some good stuff, but it is older than America and we've learned a ton about the Bible in the last 300 years including important things like the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Commentaries

- <https://www.bestcommentaries.com>
- IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary OT/NT
- NIV Application Commentary Series.
- William Barclay's series is a modern classic, but they do have some problems of being a bit old/dated
- New Testament/Old Testament For Everyone
- The Bible Speaks Today
- Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
- Holman Bible Commentary

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THIS LIFE GROUP SERIES?

FULFILLING OUR MISSION

Our goals for Life Groups through this series come from our mission statement: Help people find their purpose by

- connecting with God
- connecting with others
- and connecting others with God

People are busy. Our goal is not to form groups and get people in groups to make their lives busier. Instead our goals are directly related to these three aspects of our mission statement. This Life Group series is designed to help each person take that next step in connecting with God, connecting with others and connecting others with God.

LASTING LIFE IMPACT

We have tried to be very intentional about designing this series for maximum life impact. The percentages may vary slightly but most experts agree that on average we remember about:

- 10% of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30% of what we see
- 50% of what we write in response to what we read, hear, or see
- 70% of what we share and discuss with others
- 80% of what we experience
- 90% of what we teach others

Think about how we most often study the Bible. Most of the time we read or we hear teaching or preaching from the Bible. But with these approaches, the teacher or preacher may remember a high percentage, but we forget a very high percentage of what we have heard or read and so it has little lasting impact on our lives.

James 1:22-24 says, Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets ...

We want to do more than just listen to the word preached or read the Bible and forget. Our prayer for you through this series is that the life impact will be great as you:

- Hear sermons AND write notes
- Read the Bible with notes to help you deepen your understanding AND respond in writing using the SOAP method to apply it to your life.
- Share and discuss what you have heard, read, and written
- Teach each other as you share and discuss
- And encourage, support, and challenge each other as you live out what you are reading, hearing and discussing.
- Experience serving together to live out your faith

GROWTH FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS AND LIFE GROUPS

One of our values is Growing People Change. We believe that spiritual maturity is not something we arrive at but rather throughout the whole life of every Christ follower there is always a next step in Following Jesus. This study is not designed to be basic for beginners or advanced for the spiritually mature. Rather it is designed to work for groups with people across the spectrum and to be encouraging yet challenging for all to take the next step of growth in their relationship with Jesus.

ADAPTING THE SERIES TO FIT YOUR GROUP

This study is designed to be flexible so that no matter what type or style of group you have you can adapt it to work well for your Group. Here are some ideas for adapting the series to fit your group if your group is:

- 1) A brand new group formed for this series.
- 2) A rooted group staying together to form a Life Group.
- 3) An existing group continuing with no new members.
- 4) An existing group adding new members or two groups combining into one.
- 5) Any other variation of groups.

SCHEDULING FOR THE SERIES

The study has been broken down into seven weekly studies. An Intro Week and Closing Week is also recommended. But the number of weeks and the schedule for the series is flexible and it is not necessary to be exactly in sync with the sermon schedule. Create a schedule with your group for maximum participation and consistency of group members.

BEFORE YOUR FIRST MEETING:

For a rooted or existing group continuing with no new members

Be sure to contact everyone well in advance and confirm when and where you are having your Intro Week meeting. Confirm they will be able to attend and remind everyone to bring their workbooks. You can arrange to take workbooks for your group on consignment and then collect the money.

For a rooted or existing group adding new members or two groups combining into one

Be sure to contact everyone all new people well in advance and confirm with all returning members when and where you are having your Intro Week meeting. Confirm they will be able to attend and remind everyone to bring their workbooks. You can arrange to take workbooks for your group on consignment and then collect the money. If you are combining with another group, make sure you meet with the facilitator or a key person from the other group in advance to talk over how to best bring the two groups together and what roles each of you will have in leading the group.

For a new group

The best way to fill your group is to personally recruit/invite people to the group. Be sure to contact everyone who signed up for or was assigned to your group. Contact them as far in advance as possible and confirm where you are having your Intro Week meeting. Confirm they will be able to attend and remind everyone to bring their workbooks. Also, ask if there is anyone else they would like to invite to join the group. You can arrange to take workbooks for your group on consignment and then collect the money. If you are combining with another group, make sure you meet with the facilitator or a key person from the other group in advance to talk over how to best bring the two groups together and what roles each of you will have in leading the group.

TEN DOs & DON'Ts FOR FACILITATING YOUR GROUP EFFECTIVELY

- 1. DON'T be afraid of silence.** Silence allows people the time to process their thoughts and feelings and to share more deeply.
- 2. DON'T fall into the trap of “teaching.”** Once you fall into this trap group members become “students” and the group loses the opportunity to grow through hearing one another’s insights and stories.
- 3. DON'T be satisfied with the first responses given.** Keep probing for deeper responses.
- 4. DON'T allow someone to hijack or dominate the sharing or discussion.** When you do this other group members will shut down, stop participating or even stop coming to the group.
- 5. DON'T allow the sharing or discussion to get side tracked.** Focus the group and the sharing back on track so that you can go deeper together.
- 6. DO remember that your primary role is to listen** to group members as they respond to God’s Word and shepherd them as they take their next step of growth.
- 7. DO share with authentic vulnerability** what God is revealing to you, especially when you are struggling.
- 8. DO help group members move to personal application** instead of only making conceptual observations.
- 9. DO wrestle with the unresolved issues of life together.** By doing this instead of just feeding “right” answers your group will experience more life impact.
- 10. DO generate dialogue between the group members.** Don’t become the focal point of the group.

CONTACT US

If you have any questions or needs for your group please contact us:

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(this is for facilitators use only)

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NEHEMIAH

FULFILLING YOUR PART IN GOD'S STORY

Intro Week Facilitator Guide

PREPARING FOR INTRO WEEK MEETING

- Read through this guide and the first 6 pages of the workbook to familiarize yourself and give you an overview and prepare for your Intro Week.
- Be sure to have extra books for anyone who might not have gotten one

INTRO WEEK MEETING

1. Connect/Reconnect as a Group

For a new group or an existing group adding new members.

This time will be very important to make sure you don't have "insiders" and "outsiders" in your group. Go around the circle and have everyone share to get everyone talking.

- **When and how did you come to Purpose Church? Have you been in a Rooted or Life Group before?**

For an existing group continuing with no new members

Even though you know each other, spend time reconnecting to get everyone engaged in thinking and sharing about this series. Go around the circle and have everyone share to get everyone talking.

- **What are you looking forward to most (outside of this study) over the next 2-3 months?**
- **Where was "home" for you growing up? How long have you been away from your roots?**

2. Read the Intro Page (pg. 3) outloud together

- **What stands out to you, from this introduction?**

3. Read page 5 Understanding Nehemiah

- **What did you learn from this that will help you understand the book of Nehemiah better?**

4. Read through the page 4 "Getting the Most out of the Study" together and go through pages 6-9 to talk about the assignment for the week of doing five daily readings and SOAP study. Note that this is different than the format for the James and Philippians series.

5. Get out your calendars and go over the schedule for the series and talk about who is hosting, snacks, etc.

6. Talk about others you might want to invite or encourage to join in next week for Week 1.

NOTE: For any new group or groups that did not do the Unexpected Joy or James studies here are some additional suggestions for your first meeting.

Use the How To Build A Strong Life Group Video

We produced a 15 minute video with Pastor Glenn, Pastor Brian and other Purpose Church leaders talking about what makes a good Life Group. This will be helpful to watch and discuss.

Make a Group Covenant Agreement.

We can provide copies of this for you to go over and agree on as a group.

Use the SOAP study intro video

This video will introduce how to use the SOAP method.

BETWEEN INTRO WEEK AND WEEK 1

The contact you have between meetings is just as important as your time together in your meeting. Be sure to contact both all those who missed the Intro Week and all those who were present. Encourage those who missed to get a copy of the workbook and read the intro pages and start into the readings for Week 1. Also, check in with all who were there to let them know they are valued in the group.



NEHEMIAH

FULFILLING YOUR PART IN GOD'S STORY

Week 1 Facilitator Guide

Nehemiah 1:1–2:20

PREPARING FOR WEEK ONE MEETING

- Contact your group! The contact you have between meetings is just as important as your time together in your meeting. Be sure to contact both those who missed the Intro Week and all those who were present. Encourage those who missed to get a copy of the workbook and read the intro pages and start into the readings for Week 1. Also, check in with all who were there to let them know they are valued in the group.
- Spend time on the five daily SOAP study sections for the week and write out your SOAP's.
- Be sure to have extra books for anyone who might not have gotten one.
- Plan your group discussion using the following info.

WEEK ONE DISCUSSION GUIDE

CONNECTING RECONNECTING TIME

For New groups and existing groups adding new members

This time will be very important throughout your first weeks together. Make sure you create an environment where everyone feels comfortable talking at this safe level. If you have new people this week you will want to spend extra time having people share when and how they came to purpose church or the group and then use one of the questions below.

For an existing group continuing with no new members

Because your group has been together you might be tempted to skip past this. We strongly encourage you to begin your time with one of these questions or one that you substitute to get everyone talking and engaged in the theme of the week.

- **What unfinished, even unstarted, projects at home most disturb you?**
- **When is a time that you received news from your extended family, from “back home” or from long-time friends that broke your heart?**

Read Nehemiah 1:1-4

- What does Nehemiah learn about the condition of Jerusalem from Hanani?
- You may want to read portions of 2 Kings 25:9-21 and/or Ezra 4:7-24 and talk about the connections between these accounts.
- How does Nehemiah respond to this news?

Read Nehemiah 1:5-11

- What do you see of God's nature through Nehemiah's prayer?
- What does Nehemiah see in himself, as He seeks God in prayer?
- What does Nehemiah recall as he persists in prayer (8-10)?
- What is the basis for his final appeal (11)?

SOAP SHARING—Nehemiah 1:1-11

- From chapter 1 what scriptures stood out to you and what were your observations and applications?
- When you receive news like Nehemiah do you tend to despair over what is? Accept what is and move on? Or pray to God to seek what your response should be?

Read Nehemiah 2:1-10

- Three months have passed since chapter 1. What do you think Nehemiah has been doing?
- What does King Artaxerxes notice and why?
- What does Nehemiah request of the king?
- What does the king's response tell you about what he thinks of Nehemiah?
- What does Nehemiah's response tell us about him and his approach?
- What obstacle stands in the way for this work to succeed?

Read Nehemiah 2:11-20

- What do you think Nehemiah did his first three days in Jerusalem?
- Why do you think Nehemiah said nothing to those who would be doing the work until he had inspected the walls himself? Why did he do this at night?
- What three points does Nehemiah make to rally the troops to rebuild? Which do you think was most convincing?
- What charge do Nehemiah's opponents bring against him? How does he respond?

SOAP SHARING—Nehemiah 2:1-20

- From Chapter 2, what scriptures stood out to you and what were your observations and applications?
- When is it hardest for you to step out to follow God:
 - (a) when everything lies in ruins?
 - (b) when the workers are few?
 - (c) when others mock you?
- What might God be calling you to do and what can you apply from Chapters 1-2?

PRAYER**NEXT WEEK'S ASSIGNMENT**

Go over the Week 2 reading and SOAP study assignment.



NEHEMIAH

FULFILLING YOUR PART IN GOD'S STORY

Week 2 Facilitator Guide

Nehemiah 3:1-32

PREPARING FOR WEEK TWO MEETING

- Spend time on the five daily SOAP study sections for the week and write out your SOAP's.
- Be sure to have extra books for anyone who might not have gotten one
- Plan your group discussion using the following info.
- Look ahead at the calendar for the rest of the study and consider planning a time outside your meeting time to:
 - Do a Community Serve experience (we can help with a list of options)
 - Have an extended time of prayer
 - Share a meal or go on a fun outing together

WEEK TWO DISCUSSION GUIDE

CONNECTING RECONNECTING TIME

For New groups and existing groups adding new members

This time will be very important throughout your first weeks together. Make sure you create an environment where everyone feels comfortable talking at this safe level. If you have new people this week you will want to spend extra time having people share when and how they came to purpose church or the group and then use one of the questions above.

For an existing group continuing with no new members

Because your group has been together you might be tempted to skip past this. We strongly encourage you to begin your time with this question or one that you substitute to get everyone talking and engaged in the theme of the week.

How are you wired? Which do you prefer and why?

- a) Individual or team sports?
- b) Self-employment or a closely knit work team?
- c) A day to yourself, or a day with friends or family?

Read Nehemiah 3:1-5

- Why do you think Nehemiah chose to give a detailed account of who did the physical work of constructing the wall?
- Why do you think Nehemiah didn't build any of the wall himself?
- Read vs. 4 and 21. What does this tell us about these people?
- Why do you think the nobles of Tekoa refused to work?

SOAP SHARING—Nehemiah 3:1-5

- From this section what scriptures stood out to you and what were your observations and applications?
- What does it make you feel when others do more or less serving in the church than you?
- Without mentioning any names or pointing any fingers, do you know anyone like the nobles of Tekoa? From Nehemiah, what do you learn about how to deal with them?

Read Nehemiah 3:6-13

- How many different professional types or classes are mentioned in this section?
- What distinctions are made between them of what kind of what kind of work they could do?

SOAP SHARING—Nehemiah 3:6-13

- From this section what scriptures stood out to you and what were your observations and applications?
- Do you get caught up in comparing yourself with others who serve in different roles in the church? What feeling do these comparisons cause?

Read Nehemiah 3:14-32

- From vs. 14-15. Which of these assignments sound most attractive? Least attractive? What can we learn from this?
- What does it tell you about the way they worked from that fact that Nehemiah emphasizes who worked “next to” whom?
- Read verses 1 & 21 and verse 23. Some worked right at their own homes and some did not. What would be the strengths of both types of assignments?
- What would be the parallels to this in terms of where we serve in the church?

SOAP SHARING—Nehemiah 3:14-32

- From this section what scriptures stood out to you and what were your observations and applications?
- What ways do you get caught up in comparing the attractiveness of the areas you serve in with other areas?
- What attitudes and actions from Nehemiah’s team could help us in our work of “building” the church?
- Is there a work that you are called to that you would like to ask the group to support you with prayer, encouragement or maybe even serving alongside you?

PRAYER**NEXT WEEK’S ASSIGNMENT**

Go over the Week 3 reading and SOAP study assignment.



NEHEMIAH

FULFILLING YOUR PART IN GOD'S STORY

Week 3 Facilitator Guide

Nehemiah 4:1–5:19

PREPARING FOR WEEK THREE MEETING

- Spend time on the five daily SOAP study sections for the week and write out your SOAPs.
- Be sure to have extra books for anyone who might not have gotten one
- Plan your group discussion using the following info.
- Look ahead at the calendar for the rest of the study and consider planning a time outside your meeting time to:
 - Do a Community Serve experience (we can help with a list of options)
 - Have an extended time of prayer
 - Share a meal or go on a fun outing together

WEEK THREE DISCUSSION GUIDE

CONNECTING RECONNECTING TIME

We encourage you to begin your time with one of these questions or one that you substitute to get everyone talking and engaged in the theme of the week.

- **Share about a time when you were taunted, called names, or ridiculed. How did it affect you?**
- **What is your natural first response to opposition: Fight? Run? Give in? Negotiate? How has this changed over the years.**

Read Nehemiah 4:1-6

- Who is mentioned in this passage as the opposition to Nehemiah and the work in Jerusalem?
- Read Nehemiah 2:10, 19-20. Why do you think they were so opposed to Nehemiah's efforts?
- What weapons do they use against Nehemiah and the people?
- How does Nehemiah respond and who does he turn to in the face of opposition (v. 4)?
- What is the tone and content of Nehemiah's prayer? Is this what you expected in a prayer?
- What effect does the prayer have on the people?
- Why do you think the people "worked with all their heart"? Do you think the opposition had anything to do with this?

Read Nehemiah 4:7-23

- How does Nehemiah respond to the next threat in vs. 7-8?
- What are the five reasons the Jews felt that they wouldn't be able to complete the wall in vs. 10-12?
- What practical steps does Nehemiah take in v. 13 to restore a sense of safety to the people?

- What are the three commands Nehemiah gives in v. 14? Put yourself in the place of the workers, which of these three would you need the most?
- What happens when the Jews return to work?
- From verses 16-23, what do we learn about Nehemiah's:
 - Dependence on God?
 - Willingness to get involved personally?
 - Use of strategies and human resources?
 - Determination and perseverance?
 - other?

SOAP SHARING—Nehemiah 4:1-23

- From this section what scriptures stood out to you and what were your observations and applications?
- Which of these do you “do with all your heart” when confronted with opposition or difficulty? Work? Wor-ry? Worship? Warfare?
- What is one area of your life where there seems to be opposition or “so much rubble”? What is one way you can apply what you are learning from this chapter to your life?

Read Nehemiah 5:1-19

- What is the outcry all about? What needs are going unmet? What three groups are most affected?
- What do you suppose brought on these conditions?
- How does this affect their common desire to finish the work?
- Why does he get so angry at the nobles and officials (see also Lev. 25:39-42; Eze. 22:12-13)?
- How does Nehemiah respond? Where do you see signs of his leadership, wisdom, generosity, or sacrifice?

SOAP SHARING—Nehemiah 5:1-19

- From this section what scriptures stood out to you and what were your observations and applications?
- Which tends to discourage, distract or defeat you more, external criticism or internal division?
- Nehemiah shows that loving God and others may require personal sacrifice. What is a personal sacrifice God may be currently calling you to?

PRAYER

NEXT WEEK'S ASSIGNMENT

Go over the Week 4 reading and SOAP study assignment.



NEHEMIAH

FULFILLING YOUR PART IN GOD'S STORY

Week 4 Facilitator Guide

Nehemiah 6:1–7:73

PREPARING FOR WEEK four MEETING

- Spend time on the five daily SOAP study sections for the week and write out your SOAPs.
- Be sure to have extra books for anyone who might not have gotten one
- Plan your group discussion using the following info.
- Look ahead at the calendar for the rest of the study and consider planning a time outside your meeting time to:
 - Do a Community Serve experience (we can help with a list of options)
 - Have an extended time of prayer
 - Share a meal or go on a fun outing together

WEEK FOUR DISCUSSION GUIDE

CONNECTING RECONNECTING TIME

We encourage you to begin your time with one of these questions or one that you substitute to get everyone talking and engaged in the theme of the week.

- **Share about a recent project you completed. How did it feel?**
- **Share about a time when rumors were spread about you? How did it affect you?**

Read Nehemiah 6:1-14

- When did Sanballat and his buddies approach Nehemiah? Why were they trying to frighten the Jews (v. 1)?
- Why did Nehemiah not want to meet them (v.2)?
- What impact was the unsealed letter intended to have on the people doing the work? On the Persian king?
- How does Nehemiah respond to those who were spreading these rumors?
- What was the prophecy of Shemaiah intended to do? How did Nehemiah discern he was a false prophet. (see Numbers 18:7)

Read Nehemiah 6:15-19

- What lay in ruins for 140 years was rebuilt in 52 days. How was this possible?
- What were the two ways the surrounding nations responded to the completion of the wall?

SOAP SHARING—Nehemiah 6:1-19

- From this section what scriptures stood out to you and what were your observations and applications?

- What are the weak spots in the “wall of your heart” that need shoring up? Where are you being tempted or attacked spiritually?
- From Nehemiah’s example how will you respond?

Read Nehemiah 7:1-6 & 61-73

- What does Nehemiah do now that the wall is complete (vv.1-3)?
- Who does he put in charge of Jerusalem and why (v. 2)? Why do you think these two qualities were so important to Nehemiah?
- What was Jerusalem missing (v.4)?
- How does Nehemiah go about re-populating Jerusalem?
- Why was the genealogical record important for this purpose?
- What is the shift in focus for Nehemiah in chapter 7?

SOAP SHARING—Nehemiah 7

- From this section what scriptures stood out to you and what were your observations and applications?
- If you kept a record of your spiritual journey, who would two or three of the most meaningful people be and why?
- What is one quality that God is developing in you, that you would like to pass on to your children and their children?

PRAYER

NEXT WEEK’S ASSIGNMENT

Go over the Week 5 reading and SOAP study assignment.



NEHEMIAH

FULFILLING YOUR PART IN GOD'S STORY

Week 5 Facilitator Guide

Nehemiah 8:1–10:39

PREPARING FOR WEEK five MEETING

- Spend time on the five daily SOAP study sections for the week and write out your SOAPs.
- Be sure to have extra books for anyone who might not have gotten one
- Plan your group discussion using the following info.
- Look ahead at the calendar for the final weeks of the study and consider planning a time outside your meeting time to:
 - Do a Community Serve experience (we can help with a list of options)
 - Have an extended time of prayer
 - Share a meal or go on a fun outing together
 - Have a special closing meeting

WEEK FIVE DISCUSSION GUIDE

CONNECTING RECONNECTING TIME

We encourage you to begin your time with this question or one that you substitute to get everyone talking and engaged in the theme of the week.

- **During your growing up years, what did “confession” mean in your family?**

Read Nehemiah 8:1-18

- What was the occasion “on the 1st day of the 7th month” (see Lev. 23:24; Num 29:1-6)?
- Ezra first came to Jerusalem in 458 B.C. for the purpose of teaching the Law (see Ezr 7:6-10). Why do you suppose it has taken 13 years from that time until this general assembly for him to fully and publicly proclaim its truth?
- How long did Ezra read and who was listening (v. 3)?
- Take a moment to try to visualize verses 4-5.
- What were the other men doing in verses 7-8?
- Describe the emotion and response in each of these verses: 8:6? 8:9? 8:13? How do you account for these varied responses?
- What are the people instructed NOT to do in v. 9? Why do you think they needed this instruction?
- What do they tell the people TO DO in verse 10?

SOAP SHARING—Nehemiah 8:1-18

- From this section what scriptures stood out to you and what were your observations and applications?
- What is one thing from this chapter that would be foundational to spiritual renewal in:
 - your life? Your family?
 - our Life Group?
 - our church?

Read Nehemiah 9:1-36

- What do we see in v. 3 that is central to their gatherings?
- In the prayer recorded here, God's grace and power are reviewed. Identify what events are referred to and what God's perspective is on each event.
- What are they asking God for in verses 32-36?

SOAP SHARING—Nehemiah 9

- From this section what scriptures stood out to you and what were your observations and applications?
- How can we as Christ followers today best show sincerity in our confession and repentance of sin?
- If you were to write a prayer including bench marks or signposts of God's grace in your life what would you include?

Read Nehemiah 10:1 and 28-39

- What rationale was there for the prohibition in v. 30 (see Ex. 34:16)?
- For the prohibition and duties in verses 31-33 (see Ex. 20:8-11; 30:11-16)?
- For the duties in verses 35-36 (see Dt. 26:1-11)?
- Are Nehemiah's restrictions tighter or more lenient than required by the Law? Why might that be?
- In verses 37-39, how did the people demonstrate good stewardship? How does this compare to one hundred years earlier (see Hag. 1:4-11)?

SOAP SHARING—Nehemiah 10

- From this section what scriptures stood out to you and what were your observations and applications?
- From what you read in this chapter what is something you have been neglecting in your walk with God?

PRAYER

NEXT WEEK'S ASSIGNMENT

Go over the Week 6 reading and SOAP study assignment.



NEHEMIAH

FULFILLING YOUR PART IN GOD'S STORY

Week 6 Facilitator Guide

Nehemiah 11:1–12:43

PREPARING FOR WEEK SIX MEETING

- Spend time on the five daily SOAP study sections for the week and write out your SOAPs.
- Text, call or write a note to a couple group members who need it most between meetings
- Plan your group discussion using the following info.
- Look ahead at the calendar for your final week of the study and consider planning a time outside your meeting time to:
 - Do a Community Serve experience (we can help with a list of options)
 - Have an extended time of prayer
 - Share a meal or go on a fun outing together
 - Have a special closing meeting

WEEK SIX DISCUSSION GUIDE

CONNECTING RECONNECTING TIME

We encourage you to begin your time with one of these questions or one that you substitute to get everyone talking and engaged in the theme of the week.

- **Do you prefer rural, suburban or city life to live? Why?**
- **Describe a time when you were “drafted” or volunteered for a difficult assignment or living situation? What was that like?**

Read Nehemiah 11:1-4 (or read the whole chapter if you want to struggle to pronounce all the names :)

- Why do you think the people were so reluctant to settle in Jerusalem?
- Why did Nehemiah and the other leaders deem it necessary to re-populate Jerusalem (see 7:4)?
- What were the two recruitment strategies?
- What does the list of names vv. 3-24 say about the success of these strategies?
- How did the people respond to those who moved back to Jerusalem (v. 2)?

SOAP SHARING—Nehemiah 11:1-36

- From this section what scriptures stood out to you and what were your observations and applications?
- What are we doing to promote ministry to those who live and work in the heart of Pomona? What else could we do?

Read Nehemiah 12:1 and 22-43

- From these verses what words would you use to describe the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem? What

would it sound like? Look like? Feel like?

- What was the purpose of the procession? Where did it go? Which groups were included?
- Re-read Nehemiah 2:11-12. Compare and contrast Nehemiah's thoughts, feelings and experience before and after?
- Verse 43 says that "the sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard far away." How do you think that sound felt to all who had worked on the wall? How about to those who opposed the work?

SOAP SHARING—Nehemiah 12:1-43

- From this section what scriptures stood out to you and what were your observations and applications?
- Spend some time reflecting on what God has done in your lives and your group during this study? Take time to celebrate and praise God for all these things.

PRAYER

NEXT WEEK'S ASSIGNMENT

Go over the Week 7 reading and SOAP study assignment. Talk about your plans for the final week of this study.



NEHEMIAH

FULFILLING YOUR PART IN GOD'S STORY

Week 7 Facilitator Guide

Nehemiah 12:44–13:31

PREPARING FOR WEEK Seven MEETING

- Spend time on the five daily SOAP study sections for the week and write out your SOAPs.
- Text, call or write a note to encourage everyone to be present for your final meeting for this study.
- Look ahead at the calendar to prepare to discuss what your group will do next.

WEEK SEVEN DISCUSSION GUIDE

CONNECTING RECONNECTING TIME

We encourage you to begin your time with **one of these questions** or one that you substitute to get everyone talking and engaged in the theme of the week.

- **In what area are you most in need of a “house cleaning” right now?**
 - a physical area inside or outside your home?
 - something at work?
 - something in your finances or business matters?
 - other?
- **How clean did you keep your room growing up? Was it something you did on your own or was it motivated by your parents?**

Read Nehemiah 12:44-47

- After the Dedication Celebration, what steps do the people take to ensure that those who serve at the temple--priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers--are cared for?

Read Nehemiah 13:1-31

- What is the significance of verse 6-7?
- Nehemiah was actually gone for about 13 years before returning to Jerusalem, what appears to have happened to the spiritual condition of the people while he was away?
- Note: Make sure and emphasize that 13:1-3 is not about any kind of prejudice or racism it is about the false gods that these foreign people worshipped.
- What does he find and how does he respond:

- v. 7-9?
- v. 10-13?
- v. 15-22?
- v. 23-29?

- Put yourself in Nehemiah's shoes. If you had invested as much in these people, and seen God do so much, then returned to find them living like this, how would you have responded?

SOAP SHARING—Nehemiah 12:44-13:31

- From this section what scriptures stood out to you and what were your observations and applications?
- Which of the reforms addressed by Nehemiah points us to something that is needed in our nation? Our church? Your own life?

REFLECTING ON THE WHOLE STUDY

- Think back to before you began this study. What surprised you most about the study?
- What is the most important thing you are taking away from this study? What specific applications can you make or continue?
- Spend some time reflecting on what God has done in your lives and your group during this study? Take time to celebrate and praise God for all these things.

SUGGESTED CLOSING ACTIVITY

Take turns having each group member sit silently while the rest of the group speaks words of affirmation to them about what they have seen God doing in his/her life and what they have gained from her/him during this study.

PRAYER

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE GROUP?

Talk over plans to continue as a group and to invite others to join with you for the next study!