

## **Becoming a Team Player in God's Work Nehemiah 3**

### **Introduction:**

1. Jerusalem was in distress. It had been sacked and destroyed many years earlier and it laid it rubbish. God sent Nehemiah to rally the troops together and rebuild the gates and walls of Jerusalem. 2:17
2. How did the people respond to Nehemiah's leadership? They said, "*Let us rise up and build.*" 2:18
3. But saying and doing are two different things. Some people talk a good talk, but you don't see much action. They are full of hot air. Thankfully, this wasn't the case with these people. They were serious about their commitment to this project.
  - Three verses after we see this verbal commitment, we see them getting to work. (3:1) We don't see two or three chapters of them fussing and arguing over how to get it done.
4. Chapter 3 records the names of the people who helped to make this project a success. They accomplished their mission in just 52 days. Nehemiah apparently organized the work into sections, gave each group an assignment, and they got it done.
5. This mission took teamwork. Outwardly, this chapter may appear to simply be a boring list of names, but this chapter speaks volumes to us about the need for unity and a team spirit if we, the church, are to accomplish the job that God has given to us.
6. Do you desire to become a team player in God's work? This chapter reveals to us what it requires.

### **It requires the willingness to work with others.**

1. Three key words in verse 1: "*with his brethren.*" The high priest could not build the sheep gate by himself. It required that he work with others.
2. Look at verse 2: "*next unto him builded the men of Jericho.*" You see this all through this chapter. vs. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10
  - They were working side by side, each respecting the other's contribution to the team.
3. How does this apply to us today? In this dispensation that we live in today, God is working through a living organism, called the church, the body of Christ.

### **Ephesians 1:22-23**

4. To be a team player in God's work today you must be able to function with other members of the body (**1 Corinthians 12:14-22**). We are all different, but every member makes his contribution to the team.
5. **Ephesians 4:16** teaches that as each member of the body contributes, the body of Christ is edified (built up) and increases (grows) into Christ-likeness.
6. A local church should simply be a local expression of Christ's body to the community. It is important to be connected to a church because it is the outward, visible expression of His body. You work side by side with other members of the body.

7. You can't be a church-hopper and be a team player in God's work. At some point you must make a decision to say, "This is my church family, for better or worse, in good times and bad; I'm going to lay down roots right here and work with these other members of the body to accomplish God's work."

**It requires the putting aside of personal agendas.**

1. One of the easiest things to do in life is to become self-centered. It can happen at work, at home, in your marriage, and even at church.
  - If these workers at Jerusalem would have gotten caught up in their own personal agendas, this entire project would have been a train wreck.
  - These people set aside their personal agendas and used their gifts to work toward a common goal - the restoration of Jerusalem.
2. Every member of the body of Christ has been given gifts whereby you can contribute to the team. These gifts weren't given so that you could draw attention to yourself, compare yourself with others, and build your own agenda.
  - An old train conductor once told a young man in training, "You don't have that steam so that you can toot your own horn. It's to get that train down the tracks."
3. God gave you gifts to edify the body. **Romans 12:3-6**
  - The Bible teaches we are all different, yet we are one body in Christ. We must keep the big picture in view, and as we do this, we rejoice in the fact that we are all built differently. **Romans 12:10, 13, 15-16**
4. But if we fail to keep the big picture in view, it's easy to become preoccupied with **our** gifts, **our** ministries, **our** desires, and **our** agenda. At this point we cease to become a team player in God's work.

**It requires a commitment to the team's mission.**

1. In Nehemiah the mission was clear. Let's rebuild these walls and gates for God's glory. 2:17-18
2. As I study this chapter I am struck by how many different groups are involved in this from different places and different backgrounds. You have priests (vs.1), men of Jericho (vs. 2), men of Gibeon (vs. 7), goldsmiths, apothecaries (vs. 8), rulers of cities (vs. 9, 12), Levites (17), merchants (vs. 32). This is just a few of the groups.
3. As you read through this, certain things jump out at you.
  - Verse 12 - this guy is out there with his daughters.
  - Verse 20 - Baruch must have been quite a worker. He **earnestly** repaired.
  - But then you see people like those in verse 5. The nobles were famous and powerful (big shots). They refused to carry loads on the back of their necks. Their lack of commitment is recorded in God's Word.
4. Today, what is our mission as a church? We are to reach people with the gospel of Christ and then teach them God's Word - **reach** and **teach**. **Colossians 1:28**
5. A church will only fulfill this mission in proportion to how committed its members are to this mission. Our faithfulness, our service, our giving, our witness are all reflected by our commitment to God's mission.

### **It requires a spirit of humility.**

1. There are eight different rulers listed in this chapter. These guys were the ruling authority in their cities. They were used to giving orders, not taking them. Yet here we see all of them taking their orders from Nehemiah and working together for the common good.
2. This took humility. It always does take humility if you are going to be a team player. Something kind of funny I noticed. In verse 15, the ruler of Mizpah was asked to repair the gate of the fountain, the gate that was vital to the cities water supply.
3. But guess what assignment the ruler of Beth-haccerim drew? Look at verse 14. He was asked to repair the dung gate. Somebody had to do it! He took charge, and built it.
4. **Philippians 2:8** says that Christ “...*humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*”
  - A spirit of servanthood always shows up as a humble spirit. A spirit of humility says, "How can I serve others, be a blessing to others, and minister to others? How can I contribute to this team?"
  - A spirit of pride says, "How can others make me happy, help me, serve me?"
  - A spirit of humility binds people together to accomplish God's work.
  - A spirit of pride and arrogance destroys relationships and divides people.

### **In Conclusion:**

1. The effectiveness of our church depends on how many people are involved as contributing members of the team. Are you a team player in God's work?
  - Do you possess the willingness, and do you have the ability to work with others?
  - Are you willing to set aside any personal agenda for the good of the team?
  - Do you possess a commitment to the team's mission?
  - Do you exhibit a spirit of humility?
2. God did not place you in the body of Christ so you could simply **consume**. He placed you in the body of Christ and in a local church so you could **contribute**.