

ST. BARNABAS CHURCH, SWANLAND - SMALL GROUP NOTES

Sharing Christ through friendship

W/c Feb 25th 2018 - Time to rebuild – lessons from Nehemiah: (5) – Teaching and renewal
Bible readings: Nehemiah 8 and John 16:20-22

Welcome/ icebreaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When were you last moved (maybe to tears) by something you read or saw (eg on TV, or in a film)?
Worship	<i>Suggestions:</i> 293 Jesus, Jesus; Lord for the years; 520 Tell out, my soul; 557 Thou whose almighty word; 1015 Thank you for saving me; 1066 Thy Word is a lamp
Word (refs.↓)	NB The 10.45am sermons from the last 2 Sundays are available now to download at www.stbchurch.org.uk (click on the 'downloads' tab)
John 16:20-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How true is what Jesus saying here true of your own experience? Have there been times when sorrow has turned to joy? Is this true of your life of faith?
Nehemiah 8 vv.1-12	<p>Briefly summarise the situation/ story so far (see notes from previous weeks).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>I. The people respond to the word as it is preached (vv.1-12)</u> <p>Although the building of the walls is now complete (see Neh. 6:15), before the final rededication of the walls in chapter 12 Nehemiah and the people's spiritual leader, Ezra the priest (<i>see the book of Ezra</i>) call the whole community together to hear the Scriptures read and explained.</p> <p>Why do you think this was necessary? Had they neglected God's word because they had been busy with the building, or was there a deeper neglect going on?</p> <p>Ezra enlists 13 assistants (v.4) to help with the reading of the book of the Law, and 13 Levites to 'give the meaning' (v.7-8). Why do you think it was necessary to explain what the 'Bible' (Law) said - assuming it was the Law of Moses, i.e. the 5 books from Genesis to Deuteronomy? Is it necessary still today?</p> <p>Note their response to 'the word read' is to receive it with repentance ('mourn/grieve', v.9,11). When have you responded like that to reading the Bible?</p> <p>Nehemiah and Ezra encourage the people that more than reading the word they need to receive it and rejoice in it (v.10). How often is the Bible a source of joy for you? How can it become such more often? Should there be more opportunities for feasting and celebration in today's church gatherings? If so, how could your group help such things happen?</p>
Nehemiah 8 vv.13-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>II. The people celebrate God's goodness (vv.13-18)</u> <p>The second day of the month is a 'leaders conference' (v.13) with the result that the people are urged to celebrate the next festival ('Tabernacles') with real enthusiasm (vv. 15-17).</p> <p>In what ways could today's people of God learn from the Jews of Nehemiah's day? What lessons might we need to (re-)learn from Scripture about remembering God's goodness in difficult times and celebrating such times?</p> <p>What might you want to give thanks for in a practical way, eg by celebrating with others (v.10,12)/ sending gifts to those in need (v.10b), etc?</p>
Witness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray – for your mission link(s) and those with needs within your group. Would you like to 'attend to' the word more (eg by reading/ listening to it more)? Pray about this. Encourage one another in your 'daily diet' of Scripture reading. Finalise plans for a group gathering for Holy Week and/or Easter