

ST. BARNABAS CHURCH, SWANLAND - SMALL GROUP NOTES

Sharing Christ through friendship

W/c Feb 4th 2018 - Time to rebuild – lessons from Nehemiah: (1) – Vision.

Bible readings: Nehemiah 2

Welcome/ icebreaker	What are your holiday plans for this year?
Worship	<i>Suggestions:</i> 42 Be thou my vision; 382 Make me Lord a dreamer; 1377 Jesus, be the centre; 1433 Lord of the church; 2060 There's a lot of pain;
Word (refs.↓)	
Nehemiah 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh your memory as a group of the background to this story (see chapter 1 and make sure everyone is clear about this timeline: <i>Exodus (c.1220BC) - united monarchy (1050-930) - divided kingdoms (930-587) – fall of Jerusalem & exile to Babylon (587) – return (538) – Nehemiah & Artaxerxes, King of Persia (445-)</i> Compare and contrast what we learn about Nehemiah's prayer life in (1) ch.1:5-11 and (2) chapter 2 v.4. Is the second type of prayer possible without the first? • When do you think Nehemiah thought about what he was going to say to the king - after praying in v.4, or during the 4 months of mourning fasting and praying (ch.1)? Is one way of thinking/ planning better than the other? Why/ why not? • Nehemiah was given a vision to rebuild the city of Jerusalem (vv.7-8). It is not apparent that he consulted anyone else about these plans. Do you think it is important that leaders let others in on their plans, or is the more important thing that those plans are God's plans? What do you think about people who say 'God has told me...?' • V.17 – Nehemiah, after gaining a clear picture of the task in hand (11-16), communicates his God-given vision to the people. How does he get them onside to share his vision (see vv.17-18)? Note again that he has not consulted with anyone before announcing his vision – do you think this was wise? Do you think group or church leaders/ PCCs etc. should consult the wider group or congregation before announcing any new vision/ initiative, or is it enough simply to be confident that something is God's vision and then share that God-given vision with the wider congregation? • What do you think about Nehemiah's response to the opposition he encountered to his vision (v.10, 19)? Is it important to listen to criticism when it is clearly opposed to what God wants, or is his response (v.20) the correct one?
Witness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray – for your mission link(s) and those with needs within your group • When visions/ initiatives (either within the group or the wider church) are proposed do you support them in the way the people do in v.18? or do you often oppose them? Pray about the response you tend to make and commit to supporting Godly leadership where you recognise it. • Finalise details of your group invitation event to which you are inviting family/ friends/ neighbours who are not yet Christians (<i>NB next week is half term</i>).