



WEEK 4

OUR THEME THIS WEEK IS 'TOGETHER' – Standing Together in the Face of Opposition

THE KEY IDEA:

When we follow God's call we will often meet opposition. God is faithful and will bring about His purposes as we stand together in prayer and practical action.



OVERVIEW:

As Nehemiah and the people begin the work of rebuilding the wall, opposition rises – as it usually does when we follow God's call. We have an enemy who constantly seeks to undermine God's work. In this case, the opposition to the rebuild takes the form of ridicule, physical threats and discouragement.

Nehemiah reminds the people of what God has called them to do and they respond again in prayer. Nehemiah appeals to God – it is God's honour that is at stake if the rebuild fails. He reminds the people of God's faithfulness and power and says that God will fight for them. But Nehemiah also takes practical steps to defend the rebuild from enemy attack, arming the builders and urging them to fight together to defend their families and their freedom.

As we begin our own 'rebuild', after lockdown ... Are we prepared to face opposition together? We long to build a worshipping community that lives according to God's word and intentionally shares the life of God with those around us, but we still have an enemy who will seek to snatch that away and allow us to settle for something that falls far short of that. Our opposition may come in the form of ridicule and verbal attack from those outside of the church. It may come from cuts to funding, legal hurdles, challenges to what we believe or challenges to religious freedom. Opposition may also come from within the church in the form of criticism, personal agendas, division or apathy. As we move forward after lockdown, how do we stand together to rebuild God's church in Aotearoa-New Zealand? How do we balance prayer and confidence in God with practical action in the face of opposition?



THE SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

for your personal reading and reflection this week, as we continue our journey through Nehemiah...

Nehemiah 4:1-23

And also...

John 16:33

1 Peter 4:12

2 Timothy 3:12

THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS for Personal Reflection and/or Group Discussion:

As we start our own 'rebuild' of our church, post-lockdown, how do we recapture a God-given vision for HIS church? What does it look like to set aside our individual agendas and seek God's will for our church and our local community?

Nehemiah and the people faced 3 different forms of opposition to their rebuild – words, physical threats and discouragement. In what ways do we face these threats as God's people in Aotearoa-New Zealand today? How do you think opposition might change or increase in the future?

Sometimes we can experience opposition from within our church. How can we guard ourselves against allowing disagreement and different opinions turning into disunity and division?

Nehemiah and the people responded to opposition with prayer and practical action. How do we facilitate this in our churches and small groups?

PRAYER

Continue to pray for wisdom for governments around the world as they respond to COVID-19

Pray for God's leading for our church and other churches as we seek His way forward after lockdown

Pray for boldness and courage to follow God's leading in the face of opposition

Pray for the unity of the Spirit in our church to be preserved and cherished as we begin our 'rebuild'