



A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH, LOOKING AT THE RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH ...

We begin this six-week journey through Nehemiah having experienced a very bizarre and unprecedented time in modern history ...

Nehemiah is often viewed as a book about strong leadership that brought about the rebuilding of the walls and gates around Jerusalem. While it is that, it is so much more. Nehemiah is the story of how God chose and called and empowered a leader to lead a people in coming together to carry out the task of rebuilding a worshipping community that is living by God's word and evidencing the life of God to the nations. As we begin this journey through the book of Nehemiah together in the midst of an unprecedented national lockdown as a result of COVID-19, we have an unprecedented opportunity to re-envision what a faith community looks like as we move into a changed future.

As we journey through Nehemiah, may we as a church community be inspired by a new vision and understanding of what God is doing amongst his people, and may we join him as he prepares us to be a worshipping community that brings a renewed sense of hope and love to a world desperately in need of God.

Each week, we'll provide Scripture readings for the week, taking us through the story of Nehemiah, and there'll be questions for us to consider as we focus on key aspects of being God's people, the church, here and now.

If you haven't seen the 8-minute video clip played in our on-line Sunday service, or you want to watch it again, click on this link ...
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkETkRv9tG8>

This [Bible Project](#) video gives a great introduction to and explanation of the book of Nehemiah (and its 'partner book', Ezra) ...

WEEK 1 - PRAY AND ACT

TRANSFORMATION NEEDS BOTH GOD AND US

Nehemiah 1:1 - 2:8

Everything rests on God's involvement and leadership of his people AND everything rests on the effort of his people as we join with him in what he is already doing! Nehemiah is grieved by the news that the Israelites, who had been privileged to return to Jerusalem while the majority were still in exile, were not living God's way. The walls and gates had been severely damaged, and the people's spiritual boundaries had suffered the same fate.

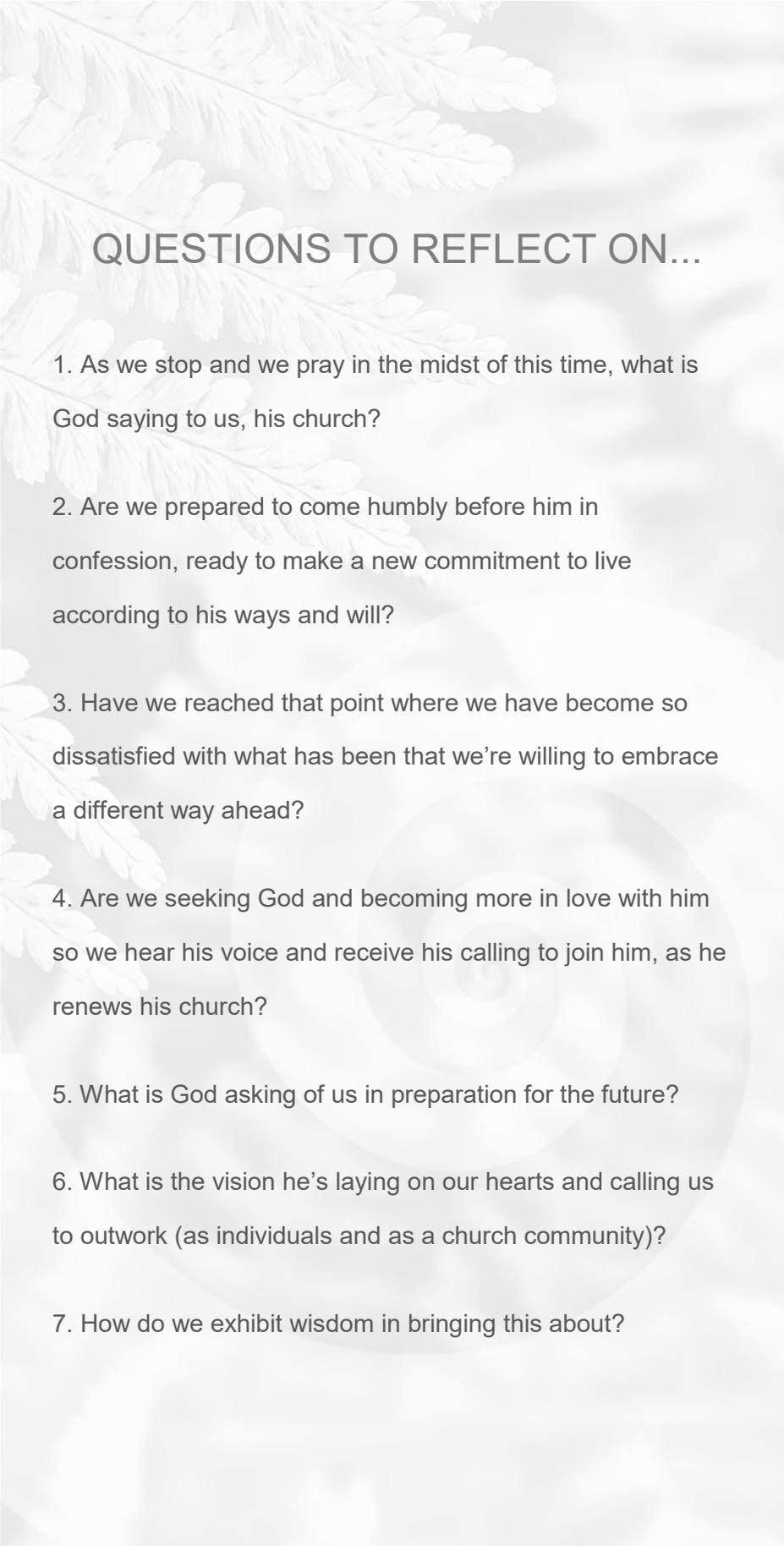
What did he do when he heard the news? He prayed for four months seeking God and waiting on God to determine how he himself was to be part of God's solution. In time God moved and opened up an opportunity for Nehemiah to actively respond. We see from chapter 2 that at the right time, Nehemiah moves with a certain confidence that is founded in knowing God is with him, and he is simply being obedient to what God has called him to do.

Nehemiah is like a bird that flies on two wings. One wing is his absolute security in the sovereignty and power of God. Everything rests on God's involvement and leadership of his people. The other wing is his absolute conviction that people must intentionally engage themselves on God's behalf as they join together in what he is already doing. Everything rests on the efforts of the people (exhibiting wisdom and carefully thought-through actions).

A bird flies on two wings, and the Christian co-exists in two realities. Everything rests on God's sovereignty, his involvement and leading, and everything rests on people's efforts in response! God has made our existence such that we work together for his purposes and glory, sharing in his love and making that known to the world.



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QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON...

1. As we stop and we pray in the midst of this time, what is God saying to us, his church?
2. Are we prepared to come humbly before him in confession, ready to make a new commitment to live according to his ways and will?
3. Have we reached that point where we have become so dissatisfied with what has been that we're willing to embrace a different way ahead?
4. Are we seeking God and becoming more in love with him so we hear his voice and receive his calling to join him, as he renews his church?
5. What is God asking of us in preparation for the future?
6. What is the vision he's laying on our hearts and calling us to outwork (as individuals and as a church community)?
7. How do we exhibit wisdom in bringing this about?