

Period of Restoration (535-425 BCE)

Redistribution of Population

Readings: *Nehemiah 7:1-73; 11:1-12:26*

Reflections:

- The city and temple is now made fully operational. We observe two more important elements to Nehemiah's leadership. First, he works with the local leadership to relocate ten percent of the population into the city to ensure it was functional and could be properly defended. We also see him organize the people to fulfill all the necessary roles both within the city and within the temple operation. Anyone who has ever led an organization knows how critical it is to get the right people doing the right roles. Here Nehemiah had to attract and mobilize both volunteers (people to live in Jerusalem) as well as staff (the Levites for the Temple) to ensure that the community was restored to its full functionality. He maintained his vision to have it restored as was originally envisioned by David and in accordance to the Law. He wanted to make sure that the practical job of rebuilding the walls led to the ultimate goal of restoring the full community.
- In this section we read a lot of lists of names. For anyone who has worked to organize people, we can find comfort. Good people organization means lots of lists of names. This kind of record keeping holds high value because it means we are treating people well by ensuring we are tracking with them and remembering their names and roles. Jesus said in John 10 that a good shepherding leader calls his sheep by name. These lists of names remind us that Nehemiah made sure everyone was cared for by name.
- In all of this, we see yet another phase of Nehemiah's leadership and this unfolding project:
 - Personal vision and sense of calling and responsibility;
 - Securing the right authority and necessary resources;
 - Mobilizing people for the project;
 - Problem solving and ensuring the project remains on track;
 - Mobilizing the necessary personnel to put everything into effective operation;

- Establishing the ongoing mission and vision of the community (we will see this in the next section.)
- A leader's work moves through various phases and to be successful, each needs to be effectively managed and completed. In all of this, we see that God chose the right person, unlikely as his original position would have suggested, for this important purpose. Like Moses, a shepherd called to lead a nation, or Peter, a fisherman called to lead the early church, so too Nehemiah reminds us that God is the ultimate leader and he delights to partner with and work through the humblest of people.