



R I S E & B U I L D

WELCOME

How To Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help life groups listen to Scripture, share honestly and practise the way of Jesus together. The aim is not to complete every question, but to create space for God to form us as a people who rise and build together.

READ	Read the passage aloud. Notice repeated words, movements, tensions and questions.
DISCUSS	Choose the questions that best serve the group. Let the text guide the conversation rather than rushing toward easy answers.
PRACTISE	Take one shared step during the week. Renewal becomes real as Scripture shapes ordinary life.
PRAY	Bring the conversation back to God. Pray for one another, the church, the city and the work of God's kingdom.

A WORD TO GROUP LEADERS

- You do not need to cover all ten questions. Aim for depth rather than speed.
- Allow silence. Some passages invite grief, confession or careful reflection.
- Keep the conversation connected to the passage and open to different experiences.
- Protect confidentiality, especially when discussing finances, conflict or personal failure.
- End with a clear shared practice and prayer rather than conversation alone.

OUR SHARED MISSION

We exist to shine the light of Jesus and reveal His kingdom in our city and beyond. This series asks what kind of people God is rebuilding us to become together.

SERIES OVERVIEW

Nehemiah: Rise & Build

Nehemiah is not merely the story of a wall rebuilt. It is the story of God restoring a vulnerable community through prayer, courageous leadership, shared work, justice, Scripture, worship and ongoing reform.

BIG IDEA

God rebuilds His people so that their shared life reflects His faithfulness, justice, holiness and hope before the world.

WEEK	MESSAGE	PASSAGE
1	Recognising The Ruins	Nehemiah 1:1-11
2	Responding To The Call	Nehemiah 2:1-10
3	Revealing The Vision	Nehemiah 2:11-20
4	Rebuilding Together	Nehemiah 3:1-32
5	Resisting Opposition	Nehemiah 4:1-23
6	Restoring Justice	Nehemiah 5:1-19
7	Remaining Focused	Nehemiah 6:1-7:4
8	Returning To The Word	Nehemiah 8:1-18
9	Renewing The Covenant	Nehemiah 9:1-10:39
10	Retaining The Renewal	Nehemiah 11:1-13:31

A REPEATED SERIES QUESTION

What kind of people is God rebuilding us to become - together - for the sake of His kingdom in our city and beyond?

WEEK 1

Recognising The Ruins

Nehemiah 1:1-11**BIG IDEA**

God begins renewal by awakening holy grief that leads to confession, prayer and hopeful action.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The series begins before a single stone is moved. Nehemiah listens to the condition of Jerusalem, allows the news to affect him deeply, and brings the ruins before God. This week invites us to resist both denial and despair and to let prayer become the birthplace of faithful action.

READ THE PASSAGE

Read Nehemiah 1:1-11 aloud. Pause briefly, then invite the group to name a word, phrase, person or movement that stood out.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

1. As you arrive, where have you recently noticed something broken, neglected or in need of renewal?
2. What exactly does Hanani report about Jerusalem, and why do you think this news affects Nehemiah so deeply?
3. Trace Nehemiah's response in verses 4-11. What does the order of his response teach us?
4. How is biblical lament different from complaining, panic or hopelessness?
5. Nehemiah begins his prayer by naming who God is. Why does the character of God matter when we face painful realities?

WEEK 1 CONTINUED

Recognising The Ruins

DISCUSS TOGETHER

6. Why does Nehemiah confess the sins of Israel as “we” rather than distancing himself from the failures of others?
7. What promises or parts of Israel's story does Nehemiah remember, and how do they give shape to his hope?
8. What do you notice about the relationship between prayer and the practical request at the end of the chapter?
9. What ruins in our lives, church or community might we have learned to ignore or accept as normal?
10. What is one faithful next step that begins with listening and prayer rather than rushing to fix everything?

PRACTISE THIS WEEK

SHARED RESPONSE

A prayerful inventory: Set aside twenty minutes this week to notice one area of brokenness. Write what you see, what you feel, what needs to be confessed, what promise of God you are holding onto, and one small action you may be called to take.

PRAY

- For courage to see what is broken without turning away.
- For humility to confess our own part rather than simply blaming others.
- For hope rooted in God's faithfulness and restoring grace.
- For wisdom about the first faithful response.

WEEK 2

Responding To The Call

Nehemiah 2:1-10

BIG IDEA

Faithful response combines prayer, courage, clarity and wise preparation, trusting that God can open unlikely doors.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Several months have passed since Nehemiah first heard the news. He has continued serving faithfully while praying and preparing. When an unexpected opportunity comes, he responds with courage, a brief prayer and a clear request. Calling is not merely a strong feeling; it takes practical shape through faithful obedience.

READ THE PASSAGE

Read Nehemiah 2:1-10 aloud. Pause briefly, then invite the group to name a word, phrase, person or movement that stood out.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

1. When have you experienced a burden that took time to become a clear next step?
2. What risks does Nehemiah face when the king notices his sadness?
3. What does Nehemiah's brief prayer in verse 4 suggest about the deeper prayer life behind the moment?
4. How does Nehemiah answer the king's question with both honesty and respect?
5. What specific things does Nehemiah request, and what do these details reveal about his preparation?

WEEK 2 CONTINUED

Responding To The Call

DISCUSS TOGETHER

6. Why is it important to hold prayer and planning together rather than setting them against each other?
7. Nehemiah describes the outcome as the gracious hand of God upon him. Where can you see God working through ordinary people, systems or authorities?
8. Why do you think opposition appears immediately after the door opens?
9. Where might God be asking you to move from concern to a clear and courageous response?
10. What preparation would help you respond faithfully when the opportunity comes?

PRACTISE THIS WEEK

SHARED RESPONSE

Prepare the request: Write one sentence naming the burden you carry, one brief prayer for courage, and one practical request or action that would move the situation forward. Share it with someone in the group who can pray with you.

PRAY

- For courage when obedience feels risky.
- For clarity about what to ask and what to do.
- For patience during seasons of waiting and preparation.
- For trust in the gracious hand of God.

WEEK 3

Revealing The Vision

Nehemiah 2:11-20

BIG IDEA

God-given vision grows through careful listening, honest assessment and an invitation for the whole community to participate.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Nehemiah does not arrive in Jerusalem making immediate announcements. He waits, quietly inspects the walls and understands the reality before gathering the leaders. When he finally speaks, he names both the disgrace and the grace of God, then invites the people to rebuild together.

READ THE PASSAGE

Read Nehemiah 2:11-20 aloud. Pause briefly, then invite the group to name a word, phrase, person or movement that stood out.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

1. What is the difference between having an idea and carrying a vision that others can share?
2. Why might Nehemiah wait three days before inspecting the walls?
3. What can we learn from the fact that he inspects the ruins quietly and carefully before speaking publicly?
4. How does Nehemiah describe the problem in verse 17 without shaming or blaming the people?
5. What place do God's gracious hand and the king's words have in the way Nehemiah shares the vision?

WEEK 3 CONTINUED

Revealing The Vision

DISCUSS TOGETHER

6. Why is the invitation “Come, let us rebuild” more powerful than presenting the project as Nehemiah's personal mission?
7. What encourages the people to respond, “Let us start rebuilding”?
8. How does Nehemiah answer ridicule without becoming defensive or distracted?
9. Where might our church or group need deeper listening and honest assessment before announcing a solution?
10. Who needs to be included so that a vision becomes shared ownership rather than one person's project?

PRACTISE THIS WEEK

SHARED RESPONSE

Listen before speaking: Choose one area where you hope to see change. Speak with one person affected by it and ask open questions before offering ideas. Record what you learned and how it reshaped your understanding.

PRAY

- For eyes to see both the ruins and the possibilities.
- For patience to listen and understand before speaking.
- For a vision shaped by God's grace rather than personal ambition.
- For unity and shared ownership across the church.

WEEK 4

Rebuilding Together

Nehemiah 3:1-32

BIG IDEA

God rebuilds through ordinary people who take responsibility for the part of the work placed before them.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Nehemiah 3 can initially feel like a long list of unfamiliar names. Yet the list is part of the message. Priests, rulers, tradespeople, families and neighbours repair different sections beside one another. The wall is rebuilt because many people offer their particular contribution to one shared work.

READ THE PASSAGE

Read Nehemiah 3:1-32 aloud. Pause briefly, then invite the group to name a word, phrase, person or movement that stood out.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

1. What details or repeated phrases stand out as you hear this chapter read?
2. What does the variety of people involved tell us about who can participate in God's work?
3. Why might some people repair the section near their own home or place of responsibility?
4. What is significant about the repeated phrase "next to them"?
5. Verse 5 notes that some nobles would not put their shoulders to the work. What attitudes can prevent people from participating?

WEEK 4 CONTINUED

Rebuilding Together

DISCUSS TOGETHER

6. How does naming the workers honour contributions that might otherwise remain hidden?
7. What would happen if one section of the wall were ignored because everyone preferred another task?
8. How can churches value different gifts without treating visible roles as more important than unseen ones?
9. What is one part of our shared life that may currently lack ownership or willing hands?
10. What section of the work might God be placing in front of you in this season?

PRACTISE THIS WEEK

SHARED RESPONSE

Take your section: Choose one practical contribution you can make this week - serving, encouraging, repairing, organising, welcoming, giving or praying. Keep it small, concrete and connected to the work of others.

PRAY

- For gratitude for every person and every contribution.
- For humility to serve without comparison or recognition.
- For courage to take responsibility for the work before us.
- For unity as different people build side by side.

WEEK 5

Resisting Opposition

Nehemiah 4:1-23

BIG IDEA

God's people resist opposition through prayer, wise action, shared vigilance and remembering the Lord.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

As the work advances, opposition becomes more intense. Ridicule develops into threats, while exhaustion and discouragement grow within the community. Nehemiah responds neither with panic nor denial. The people pray, organise, guard one another and continue building with their attention fixed on God.

READ THE PASSAGE

Read Nehemiah 4:1-23 aloud. Pause briefly, then invite the group to name a word, phrase, person or movement that stood out.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

1. Which kind of opposition is hardest for you: ridicule, criticism, threat, fatigue or discouragement?
2. What do Sanballat and Tobiah hope their mockery will accomplish?
3. How do Nehemiah and the people respond when opposition moves from words to threats?
4. What does the phrase "we prayed to our God and posted a guard" teach about dependence and responsibility?
5. Where does discouragement arise from within the community in verses 10-12?

WEEK 5 CONTINUED

Resisting Opposition

DISCUSS TOGETHER

6. Why does Nehemiah tell the people to remember the Lord rather than simply telling them to be braver?
7. What does it mean that the builders work with awareness, readiness and connection to one another?
8. How can a group distinguish genuine opposition from helpful correction or accountability?
9. Where are fatigue or fearful voices making faithful work seem impossible?
10. What combination of prayer, practical action and shared support is needed in that situation?

PRACTISE THIS WEEK

SHARED RESPONSE

Pray and post a guard: Name one pressure that is weakening your faithfulness. Pair one prayer with one practical safeguard - a boundary, conversation, plan, companion or change of rhythm.

PRAY

- For strength where people are tired or discouraged.
- For wisdom to recognise both danger and helpful correction.
- For courage rooted in remembering the greatness of God.
- For a community that protects and strengthens one another.

WEEK 6

Restoring Justice

Nehemiah 5:1-19

BIG IDEA

God's restoration must reach the relationships, economics and use of power within the community.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The greatest threat in this chapter does not come from outside Jerusalem. Families are suffering because wealthier members of the same community are profiting from their desperation. Nehemiah listens to the cry, reflects, confronts the injustice and calls for concrete restitution.

READ THE PASSAGE

Read Nehemiah 5:1-19 aloud. Pause briefly, then invite the group to name a word, phrase, person or movement that stood out.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

1. What kinds of pressure and hardship are the families describing in verses 1-5?
2. Why is injustice within the community especially damaging to the rebuilding work?
3. What can we learn from the fact that Nehemiah becomes angry but first “ponders” the situation?
4. Why does he confront the nobles and officials publicly rather than treating the issue as a private misunderstanding?
5. What does genuine repentance look like in verses 10-13?

WEEK 6 CONTINUED

Restoring Justice

DISCUSS TOGETHER

6. Why is returning property and cancelling exploitation more meaningful than simply expressing regret?
7. How does Nehemiah's own use of the governor's privileges strengthen his credibility?
8. What does "the fear of God" have to do with money, power and the treatment of vulnerable people?
9. Where might cost-of-living pressure, debt, housing or unequal access be affecting people around us?
10. What could our group or church do that offers practical help while preserving dignity?

PRACTISE THIS WEEK

SHARED RESPONSE

Make generosity concrete: As a group, choose one act of practical support - provide a meal, contribute to a need, help someone access services, share skills or simplify an expense so others can participate.

PRAY

- For people carrying financial pressure, debt or housing stress.
- For leaders to use influence and resources with integrity.
- For repentance that repairs harm wherever possible.
- For a church community marked by justice, generosity and dignity.

WEEK 7

Remaining Focused

Nehemiah 6:1-7:4

BIG IDEA

Finishing God's work requires discernment to resist distraction, intimidation, compromise and self-importance.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

As the wall approaches completion, the opposition changes tactics. Nehemiah faces attractive invitations, repeated pressure, public accusations and spiritual-sounding manipulation. He remains focused without becoming reckless, defensive or controlled by fear.

READ THE PASSAGE

Read Nehemiah 6:1-7:4 aloud. Pause briefly, then invite the group to name a word, phrase, person or movement that stood out.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

1. What kinds of distraction most easily pull you away from what matters?
2. Why might the invitation to meet in the plain of Ono initially sound reasonable?
3. What can we learn from Nehemiah giving the same clear answer four times?
4. How does the open letter attempt to control Nehemiah through fear for his reputation?
5. Why does Nehemiah answer the accusation briefly rather than defending himself endlessly?

WEEK 7 CONTINUED

Remaining Focused

DISCUSS TOGETHER

6. What makes Shemaiah's advice spiritually dangerous even though it sounds protective?
7. How can we test spiritual-sounding advice by Scripture, character, motive and fruit?
8. What does the completion of the wall reveal to the surrounding enemies?
9. Why does the work still require leaders, guards and wise structures after the wall is finished?
10. What is one "great work" you need to remain focused on, and what keeps calling you down from it?

PRACTISE THIS WEEK

SHARED RESPONSE

Name the yes and the no: Write one sentence describing your main faithful priority for this season. Then identify one distraction to decline and one practical step that protects your attention.

PRAY

- For discernment when invitations or advice are unclear.
- For freedom from fear about reputation and criticism.
- For humble focus rather than stubborn self-importance.
- For strength to finish and wisdom to guard what has been built.

WEEK 8

Returning To The Word

Nehemiah 8:1-18

BIG IDEA

Renewal deepens when God's people gather around Scripture, understand it, respond with worship and joy, and practise what they hear.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The wall has been rebuilt, but the deeper work is forming a renewed people. The community gathers and asks Ezra to bring the Book of the Law. Scripture is read, explained, received emotionally and put into practice. The result is conviction, joy, generosity and shared worship.

READ THE PASSAGE

Read Nehemiah 8:1-18 aloud. Pause briefly, then invite the group to name a word, phrase, person or movement that stood out.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

1. What has helped Scripture feel living and meaningful rather than merely familiar?
2. What is significant about the people themselves asking for the Book of the Law?
3. What do the length of the reading and the attentiveness of the people communicate?
4. Why is explanation so important in verses 7-8?
5. How do worship, understanding and emotional response belong together in this scene?

WEEK 8 CONTINUED

Returning To The Word

DISCUSS TOGETHER

6. Why do Nehemiah and Ezra redirect the people from weeping toward holy joy on this particular day?
7. What might it mean that “the joy of the Lord is your strength”?
8. How does celebration become generous toward those who have nothing prepared?
9. What happens when the people discover the Feast of Booths in Scripture and put it into practice?
10. What shared practice could help our group become more deeply shaped by Scripture?

PRACTISE THIS WEEK

SHARED RESPONSE

Read, reflect, respond: On three days this week, read a short section of Nehemiah 8. Write one thing you learn about God, one response for your own life, and one person with whom you can share encouragement or generosity.

PRAY

- For hunger to hear God through Scripture.
- For teachers and leaders who help people understand the text.
- For conviction that leads to grace-filled obedience rather than condemnation.
- For joy that becomes generosity and shared celebration.

WEEK 9

Renewing The Covenant

Nehemiah 9:1-10:39**BIG IDEA**

True renewal remembers God's faithfulness, confesses our unfaithfulness and recommits the whole of life to covenant obedience.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The people respond to the Word by retelling the story of God's grace and their repeated failure. The prayer is honest but not hopeless. Again and again, human unfaithfulness is met by the mercy of God. The community then makes concrete commitments about worship, relationships, generosity and shared life.

READ THE PASSAGE

Read Nehemiah 9:1-10:39 aloud. Pause briefly, then invite the group to name a word, phrase, person or movement that stood out.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

1. Why is it helpful to confess sin within the larger story of God's faithfulness?
2. What actions and qualities of God are repeated throughout the prayer in chapter 9?
3. What recurring patterns of human failure do the people name honestly?
4. What effect does the repeated movement "But You..." have on the tone of the prayer?
5. How does remembering grace protect confession from becoming either shallow or despairing?

WEEK 9 CONTINUED

Renewing The Covenant

DISCUSS TOGETHER

6. Why do the people name their present hardship rather than only speaking about past generations?
7. What makes the commitments in chapter 10 concrete rather than vague?
8. How should Christians understand these commitments through Jesus and the new covenant?
9. Which areas of ordinary life - worship, money, rest, relationships or generosity - most need renewed attention?
10. What kind of shared commitment would be realistic, grace-shaped and sustainable for our group?

PRACTISE THIS WEEK

SHARED RESPONSE

A shared covenant practice: Choose one simple practice for the next month - weekly worship, a Sabbath rhythm, generosity, daily Scripture, hospitality or prayer. Decide how the group will encourage one another without turning it into legalism.

PRAY

- Praise God for His faithfulness across our story.
- Confess patterns of pride, forgetfulness or disobedience.
- Receive the mercy and forgiveness offered through Christ.
- Ask for the Spirit's power to make renewed commitments tangible.

WEEK 10

Retaining The Renewal

Nehemiah 11:1-13:31

BIG IDEA

Renewal must be inhabited, celebrated, guarded and continually deepened by the grace of God.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The closing chapters move from repopulating Jerusalem and dedicating the wall to the sobering return of old patterns. Structures, celebrations and strong leadership matter, but they cannot transform the heart by themselves. The ending points beyond Nehemiah toward the deeper renewal God gives through Christ and the Spirit.

READ THE PASSAGE

Read Nehemiah 11:1-13:31 aloud. Pause briefly, then invite the group to name a word, phrase, person or movement that stood out.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

1. Why might moving into Jerusalem have involved sacrifice as well as privilege?
2. What does the repopulation of the city teach about renewal becoming part of ordinary life?
3. What details stand out in the dedication of the wall in chapter 12?
4. Why is public celebration important after a long and difficult season of rebuilding?
5. What failures reappear in chapter 13 after Nehemiah has been away?

WEEK 10 CONTINUED

Retaining The Renewal

DISCUSS TOGETHER

6. What do these setbacks reveal about the limits of external reform and strong leadership?
7. Which structures or habits are genuinely helpful for protecting worship, justice, care and mission?
8. How can those structures remain dependent on grace rather than becoming controlling or lifeless?
9. How does Jesus provide the deeper covenant renewal that Nehemiah cannot produce?
10. What would help the renewal we have discussed throughout this series become a sustained way of life?

PRACTISE THIS WEEK

SHARED RESPONSE

Build a sustaining rhythm: Choose one practice from the series that you want to carry forward for the next three months. Name when, where and with whom it will happen, and how you will return to grace when you fall short.

PRAY

- Give thanks for signs of God's restoring work among us.
- For practices and structures that sustain faithfulness over time.
- For humility when old patterns return and repentance is needed again.
- For the Spirit to build us into a people who reflect the kingdom of Jesus.

A CLOSING PRAYER

Rise Among Us, Lord Jesus

PRAY TOGETHER

God of heaven, You see what is broken and You remain faithful. Teach us to listen, lament and pray. Give us courage to respond, humility to build together, strength to resist opposition and integrity to practise justice. Gather us around Your Word, renew us by Your grace and sustain what You begin among us. Build us into a people who shine the light of Jesus and reveal His kingdom in our city and beyond. Amen.

“The God of heaven will give us success. We His servants will start rebuilding.”

NEHEMIAH 2:20