

Recovery (stage 2 of disaster cycle)



Why use this Bible study?

This Bible study can help us understand the second stage of the disaster cycle - recovery, and the importance of planning and involving the whole community in this process.



Rebuilding the walls

Read Nehemiah 1-4. God called Nehemiah to lead the reconstruction of Jerusalem after the disaster of invasion and conquest, which had taken place about 70 years earlier. Much of the city, including the protective walls, had been destroyed. Nehemiah, a Jewish captive in Babylon, had risen to an important position in the king's palace. He asked the king (the government authority at that time) for permission to return to his city and for extra resources to rebuild it (Nehemiah 2:8). The king generously gave Nehemiah letters to the local governors and an armed escort for his protection (2:9).



Key points

- Nehemiah provides us with good lessons on planning, organisation, motivating the community, dealing with opposition, and the importance of prayer in the whole recovery process. He showed that recovery is more than physical rebuilding. There are spiritual battles also and a need to rebuild and reform unjust social structures, which often increase the suffering of the poor.



Questions for discussion

- Nehemiah made a night-time inspection of the damage to the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:11-16). Why do you think he did this?
- How does Nehemiah motivate and organise the people for the task of rebuilding? (Nehemiah 2:17-18; 3:1-32). What does this teach us about sharing or delegating specific tasks?
- What forms of opposition did Nehemiah encounter? How did Nehemiah deal with this opposition? (Nehemiah 2:19-20; 4:1-5, 7-9, 13-14; 6:1-13).

- According to Nehemiah 6:15, the work was completed in just 52 days, an amazing achievement. What do you think was the 'secret' of Nehemiah's success?



Notes

This Bible study was first published in Tearfund (2011) *Disasters and the local church*
http://learn.tearfund.org/en/themes/disasters/disasters_and_the_local_church/