

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE
DECEMBER 3-4, 2011
DANIEL and NEHEMIAH



1. Check in with your group members: how is everyone doing?
2. Daniel was an Israelite who was living in Babylon because God's people had been carried into Exile in 587 BC. The story of Daniel and the Lion's Den is found in Daniel 6. On your own this week, read this chapter and ask God, "What are you saying to me through this story?"
3. In 539 BC, the Persians captured Babylon. Under Persian kings, the Israelites were allowed to return home and rebuild their lives. Read Nehemiah 1:1-4. Why were the people in "great trouble and disgrace"? What is Nehemiah's response to this news? Why do you think he was so upset? How do you usually respond to upsetting news? How can prayer help when we receive troubling news? How can prayer help prepare us to act and meet the needs around us?
4. Nehemiah asks the king of Persia for permission to go and rebuild the wall around Jerusalem and his request is granted. Nehemiah shares his vision with the people in Jerusalem in Nehemiah 2:17-18. What points does Nehemiah make to rally the troops? Which one do you think is most important? Why? When starting a new endeavor, how do you know if "the gracious hand of God" is upon you? How important is it to have God's blessing? Is there a project or ministry that you think God wants you to start? How can your group support you as you get going?
5. Read Nehemiah 4:7-15. What discouraging things happen or are said in this passage? How does Nehemiah respond? Do you think it is common to receive criticism when doing something big with God? Why or why not? When in your life have you felt discouragement? Who was there to encourage you to keep going?
6. The challenge this month is to "Create a Story of Hope" for someone in your life? What are some ideas you have to bring Jesus' hope to the people around you these next weeks? Is there something your group wants to do together?
7. Pray for any prayer requests from the group.

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE
DECEMBER 3-4, 2011
DANIEL and NEHEMIAH



1. Check in with your group members: how is everyone doing?
2. Daniel was an Israelite who was living in Babylon because God's people had been carried into Exile in 587 BC. The story of Daniel and the Lion's Den is found in Daniel 6. On your own this week, read this chapter and ask God, "What are you saying to me through this story?"
3. In 539 BC, the Persians captured Babylon. Under Persian kings, the Israelites were allowed to return home and rebuild their lives. Read Nehemiah 1:1-4. Why were the people in "great trouble and disgrace"? What is Nehemiah's response to this news? Why do you think he was so upset? How do you usually respond to upsetting news? How can prayer help when we receive troubling news? How can prayer help prepare us to act and meet the needs around us?
4. Nehemiah asks the king of Persia for permission to go and rebuild the wall around Jerusalem and his request is granted. Nehemiah shares his vision with the people in Jerusalem in Nehemiah 2:17-18. What points does Nehemiah make to rally the troops? Which one do you think is most important? Why? When starting a new endeavor, how do you know if "the gracious hand of God" is upon you? How important is it to have God's blessing? Is there a project or ministry that you think God wants you to start? How can your group support you as you get going?
5. Read Nehemiah 4:7-15. What discouraging things happen or are said in this passage? How does Nehemiah respond? Do you think it is common to receive criticism when doing something big with God? Why or why not? When in your life have you felt discouragement? Who was there to encourage you to keep going?
6. The challenge this month is to "Create a Story of Hope" for someone in your life? What are some ideas you have to bring Jesus' hope to the people around you these next weeks? Is there something your group wants to do together?
7. Pray for any prayer requests from the group.

THE STORY CONTINUES...

In 587 BC, the Babylonians conquer the southern kingdom of Israel (Judah), destroy everything, and carry the people into exile. Then in 539 BC, the Persians conquer the Babylonians and allow some of the Jews (those from Judah) to return to their homeland. They rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. Nehemiah learns that the city walls are still in ruins and begins a massive project with the help of God to rebuild. Nehemiah teaches valuable lessons on leadership, prayer, and perseverance. The books of Daniel, Ezra, Esther, and Nehemiah tell the story of God's people in Exile and their return to their homeland.

NOTES:

THE STORY CONTINUES...

In 587 BC, the Babylonians conquer the southern kingdom of Israel (Judah), destroy everything, and carry the people into exile. Then in 539 BC, the Persians conquer the Babylonians and allow some of the Jews (those from Judah) to return to their homeland. They rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. Nehemiah learns that the city walls are still in ruins and begins a massive project with the help of God to rebuild. Nehemiah teaches valuable lessons on leadership, prayer, and perseverance. The books of Daniel, Ezra, Esther, and Nehemiah tell the story of God's people in Exile and their return to their homeland.

NOTES: