

Nehemiah 7:1-6 – Leaders Must Pass the Torch

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Gaebelein, Handfuls, Gill, Clarke, Geneva, Barnes, Armstrong, Gray, JFB, Poole, Henry, Delitzsch, Expositors Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: **One of the obsessions of political leaders has been their craving to keep power.** Some want to keep power because **others might find out their crimes** and hold them accountable, but **most are just obsessed with power so they can either make money or exercise control of others.** So these political leaders will imprison their enemies, change the laws, rig elections, or kill anyone who desires to take power from them. **Some, even if they give up power, only give it up for their relatives.** **This is why some of them argued for the Divine right of kings to choose the one who would rule after they died.**

What a difference it is with God's people! God's leaders put those in place who would serve the community of saints best! Anytime this does not happen troubles comes on the church of Jesus. **Nehemiah teaches us about the need to put good leaders in place.**

Our headings are:

Delegation of responsibilities

Description of duties for the new leaders

Documentation of those being led

Our goals are: **That you will see there must be godly leadership established in church and state so the kingdom of Jesus will expand in all its glory, so Jesus will be praised even more.**

Delegation of responsibilities

1 Then it was, when the wall was built and I had hung the doors, when the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed, 2 that I gave the charge of Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the leader of the citadel, for he was a faithful man and feared God more than many.

1. With the walls repaired, the gates installed, and the doors in the gates installed, Nehemiah filled all positions of leadership.

He knew he would soon have to go back to Shushan to resume his duties for the Medo-Persian king.

He appointed people to their religious, economic, and social duties to secure religious, economic, and social freedoms.

2. Specifically, Nehemiah appointed Hanani leader of Jerusalem, and he had Rephaiah and Shallum under him.

Hanani was the one who had brought news of Jerusalem to Nehemiah while he served in Shushan. Hanani, who had already shown concern for God's people, was appointed as head of Jerusalem.

Hananiah was appointed "ruler of the citadel," meaning he was the King of Persia's representative to the Jews.

Both men were not only God-fearing, they were also patriotic. This meant they would not be corrupted or take bribes or abuse the people. Many fear God, but some fear him exceptionally.

Both men were "local" and would know the needs of the local people more.

3. Nehemiah did not want to undo all the work he had done as governor, so he found these truly qualified men.

Contrast this to when David became corrupt and wanted to appoint his "favorite" son to be king instead of the one who was godly and chosen by God.

4. Lessons - 7:

a. No one is too big to serve – even in humble duties. Just like a man may do the dishes, or laundry, or change diapers, elders may help in diaconal needs. Elders can clean gutters! Deacons can care for the elderly.

b. The church needs leaders to be successful. The Brethren church, with no leadership, is a corruption of God's order.

Isaiah 62:6 I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent,

c. All good missionaries, pastors, and elders must look for those who will take over after their time of service is up.

d. The godliest people should be appointed to rule in Christ's church. Don't take the most popular, or the most charismatic, or a relative, but the godliest.

e. The best way to defend yourself, family, church, and nation is to worship God! Give that the priority! Worshiping God also brings prosperity and peace. It is never a wasted time when you worship God. **Promote and work for the worship of God.**

f. God will bless the ones who serve.

Psalms 15:4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the LORD; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;

And more, the church will flourish when there are godly leaders in place.

g. Patriotism is not to be despised. Love your country...and your adopted country.

Description of duties for of the new leaders

3 And I said to them, "**Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot; and while they stand guard, let them shut and bar the doors; and appoint guards from among the inhabitants** of Jerusalem, one at his watch station and another in front of his own house." 4 Now the city was large and spacious, but the people in it were few, and the **houses were not rebuilt**.

1. The new leaders were called to protect the innocent and punish the wicked.

2. To this end

a. The new leaders had to ensure the gates of Jerusalem were opened later in the day, rather than early in the morning. This ensured the people were awake and ready to do battle if necessary. And with the sun up, they could better see the enemy.

b. The gates were to be bolted shut early when the guards were still on duty; they could not drop their guard!

c. They had to appoint guards with personal links to where they lived. Some watched in a more general way, but others guarded near their own house. This meant there was "skin in the game." Also, no foreigner was allowed to be watchman for the house of God. **That was to protect the purity of worship!**

3. This extra work had to be done because there were not enough people living in Jerusalem and few houses were rebuilt.

Nehemiah had a view to the future... like a good leader.

He was not only thinking of the immediate future, but the distant future, when Messiah would come to be the King of Peace in the City of Peace.

That was what Zechariah prophesied earlier...and was the hope of all who followed.

Zechariah 8:3 "Thus says the LORD: 'I will return to Zion, And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the LORD of hosts, The Holy Mountain.'

4. Lessons - 5:

a. Leaders must not overstep their boundaries (which must be clearly delineated), and they must not ignore their duties, or harm will come to the kingdom.

b. No non-believer (or novice believer) is to oversee believers. They don't have the same commitment to the Lord. In fact, the non-believer has no commitment but his own self-interests.

c. No non-believer should be allowed to enter the kingdom of Jesus. It is the duty of the leader to prevent non-believers from entering and expelling non-believers who are within.

d. It was God who was using the leaders and blessing them in their work. The leaders could not take credit; they were merely agents. Neither should you take credit for what God does through you.

Psalms 127:1 Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.

e. Always keep an eye to the future...and ask: "How will my actions help or hurt the kingdom?"
This is always the big picture question.

Documentation of those being led

5 Then my **God put it into my heart** to gather the nobles, the rulers, and the people, that they might be **registered by genealogy**. And I found a register of the genealogy of those who had come up in the first return, and found written in it: 6 These are the people of the province who came back from the captivity, of those who had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar **the king of Babylon had carried away**, and **who returned to Jerusalem** and Judah, **everyone to his city**.

1. God moved Nehemiah to get the genealogy recorded and he used the nobles, rulers, and people to do so. More, he did not want to take credit for this good and essential work; instead, he credited it to God.
Isaiah 28:26 For He instructs him in right judgment, His God teaches him.

2. The Jewish leaders and people likely put together about 100 years of missing history.

This wasn't possible with the northern 10 ½ tribes who were now away for more than 200 years and had intermarried with foreigners, but it was still possible for Judah. You can find a lot of these details in Ezra.

3. This genealogy was essential in the history of redemption to prove the pedigree of the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Jesus not only had to come from Abraham, he had to come from Isaac, and Jacob, and Judah, and David!

But this was also essential for that time to remind the Jews there was a social compact. They had to work together for the common God. And how could they work together for the common good if they did not have a record of who needed the common good? This list was not to show “the more, the merrier.”

4. And then the long genealogical list was compiled of those who were taken away, those who returned, and those who had remained in Jerusalem.

5. Lessons - 3:

a. It is important to keep records for the good of the covenant community and glory of Christ. This is why we have membership. Leaders are to make sure proper records are kept for accountability.

b. These old and new records proved the pedigree of Jesus from both his mother and his father from the lineage of David. Nehemiah might not have realized how important his work was, but it was.

c. You are never sufficient for the tasks – especially in leadership- God has given to us, so you must acknowledge this and plead to God for help. Thank him when you accomplish anything!

2 Corinthians 3:5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,

Conclusion:

Knowing his time in Jerusalem was up and he had to return to Shushan, **Nehemiah selected qualified men to take over the work of overseeing the people of God, preserving worship, and keeping them safe.** Each of the new leaders was **appointed to specific tasks.** And **good records were kept** to ensure things worked smoothly and the people were secured.

Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

1. Work for godly leadership in the church of Christ. That work means you must **encourage, pray for, and support those who are serving in leadership** positions. This means you must **prepare yourself to serve** in leadership positions to which God may call you. This means you will **start doing things in the area in which God is calling you.** For example, start watching out for people's spiritual needs, if God is calling you as an elder.

2. Be ready to delegate responsibilities as a leader. Start **teaching your children to lead** in the home, especially your sons, so they could be good husbands and fathers. Start **recruiting others who might be called to lead** in Christ's church.

3. Make sure things are done decently and in order. Keep good records. Keep order in the church. Discipline the rebel. Invite the faithful to membership.

Finally: If your name is not on the church's roll, you are in trouble. You need to do what it takes to get your name on the church roll. What will get your name there? Know the one who owns the church. Love him. Receive what he offers: His life and death! You will become his child. He will welcome you into his family! Aw...safety!