

LEADER DISCUSSION GUIDE

citygroups

Fall 2022

Week of September 4

Stuck in the Middle: Christian Community

DISCUSSION FOCUS

Read (Primary Text): Nehemiah 4:13–20

Supporting Texts: Hebrews 10:23–25; Ephesians 4:15–16; 1 Corinthians 12:12–26; Acts 2:42–47

MAIN IDEA: While we are “stuck in the middle,” Christian community is necessary for growth, spiritual protection, and mutual encouragement in the gospel.

OBSERVE

Read Nehemiah 4:1–12. What types of opposition were the Jews facing in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem?

- *Mockery (vv. 1–3)*
- *Plots of sabotage (v. 8)*
- *Violence to the point of murder (v. 11)*
- *The psychological pressure of an enormous project (over 1.5 miles of wall to be restored)*

Read Nehemiah 4:13–20. What encouragement and measures did Nehemiah take to complete the project?

- *Organized units of families (v. 13)*
- *Armed builders with clubs, swords, spears, bows, armor, shields (vv. 13, 16–18)*
- *Division of his men into builders and guards (v. 16)*
- *Exhortation to remember God (vv. 14, 20)*
- *Exhortation to fight for and rally around one another (vv. 14, 20)*

INTERPRET

How were the Jews able to complete the building of the wall? What would have happened if they were divided and/or isolated from one another?

- *They relied on the Lord to fight for them. They worked closely together and fought for one another, rushing to the aid of one another. They were vigilant and prepared against attacks while they completed the project.*
- *If they would have been isolated, the enemy would have killed them off one by one and destroyed their work. If they would have been divided against one another, they wouldn't need an outside enemy to frustrate their work because they would not accomplish it anyway.*

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Read Hebrews 10:23–25 and Acts 2:42–47. How do these verses relate to one another?

- *Hebrews 10:23–25 emphasizes the need to meet together in Christian community in order to stir one another up to good works and to encourage each other in the faith. Acts 2:42–47 gives a clear picture of what this looks like in being unified in purpose and action.*

APPLY

How can we relate the importance of the Jews working together to build the wall to the importance of Christian community today in the church?

- *In the same way that God used His people (the Jews) to restore and rebuild what was broken physically, He uses His people (the Church) to do the same spiritually.*
- *In the same way that God's people (the Jews) had to follow God and fight for one another against a physical enemy, today God's people (the church) must follow God and fight for one another against a spiritual enemy.*
- *If the people of the church do not have Christian community, our isolation will lead to failure in the task at hand as well as lead to destruction as we are picked off by our adversary, Satan.*

What are reasons why people do not get involved in Christian community?

- *Sin/Selfishness*
- *Radical Individualism*
- *Frequent moves make it difficult to maintain community*
- *Spiritual attack by the enemy (Satan)*
- *Past hurts from community prevent vulnerability/trust*

What are reasons why people should get involved in Christian community while “stuck in the middle” between Jesus’ first coming (Christmas) and His Second Coming?

- *We were created for community, not to be alone (Gen 2:18–23)*
- *In the physical absence of Jesus Christ, the Church is His hands and feet as guided by the Holy Spirit*
- *Isolation opens us up to temptation*
- *Christian community provides spiritual protection*
- *Christian community provides mutual encouragement in the faith*
- *There is strength in numbers as we are pilgrims in a foreign land (1 Pet 2:11)*
- *Jesus has commanded us (John 13:34–35)*

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City Groups exist as an extension of our Sunday gatherings, providing an environment for spiritual formation through intentional study, prayer, and fellowship, to equip Christ followers to make disciples.