

Word notes Sunday 13/11/2011 Tony Hodge
Nehemiah 8: Reading The Word

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: Nehemiah 8

In chapter 7 we read that the walls are completed and the gates hung, closed and manned. The people are counted and given roles according to their gifts and eligibility. They give generously and are good stewards. Once they are secure internal renewal can occur. Internal renewal now that all is secure. When we are saved we become a new creation, there is an internal shake-up, a re-alignment of our inner being (2 Corinthians 5:17). Further renewal work occurs when we read God's Word: the Bible.

Calling Ezra to bring out the book of the law the people were:

- Enthusiastic – they stayed all day, all of them.
- In the right place - they were at the Water Gate, ready to be washed.
- Attentive – not just listening casually. Calvin likened merely listening to a warrior hanging up his splendid armour and allowing it to go rusty,
- Teachable - they stayed on for the Bible study/Life application.

They applied the word to their lives, application of the Word into our lives means not just hearing it, nor studying it, nor discussing it but doing it (James 1:22-25):

- Sin was exposed and they grieved, then they were instructed to rejoice that they now understood.
- They gave thanks.
- God's ways were re-instated in their lives – the festival of booths.

Puritans, for all their faults often saw the Word as a mirror up to which they could hold their lives, not just to admire the view, but to see how to grow in Godliness.

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

Ask a few people to describe the Bible in a few words as if they were telling a non-Christian about it. Write all these down on a large sheet of paper.

How has the Word impacted your life bringing change as it was applied? Again write down some single-words that summarise its impact.

Read Hebrews 4:12. What evidence of this do we read in Nehemiah 8?

How often did the newly secure (saved) people in Jerusalem hear the Word? What does that suggest to you that our own habit should be?

Looking at the first list above which of these attitudes do you have towards: private reading and study, preaching & teaching, small group discussion & application? What can you do to grow in these?

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

How can we share Biblical truth with unbelievers?