

Your Part of the Wall

At first glance Nehemiah 3 looks like one of those boring Old Testament chapters which lists out people by name in a tedious but methodical manner, kind of like a legal document, so descendants can say, “see, my ancestors did their bit”.

But this chapter is one of the best illustrations for how the church should work. For how we should build the church. (The body of Yeshua, not the buildings it meets in).

Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests went to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set its doors in place, building as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and as far as the Tower of Hananel. The men of Jericho built the adjoining section, and Zaccur son of Imri built next to them. The Fish Gate was rebuilt by the sons of Hassenah. They laid its beams and put its doors and bolts and bars in place. Meremoth son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, repaired the next section. Next to him Meshullam son of Berekiah, the son of Meshezabel, made repairs, and next to him Zadok son of Baana also made repairs. The next section was repaired by the men of Tekoa, but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors.

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Maybe the gates themselves needed some professional carpenters. And for sure, some parts of church building do need people with special skills and some experience to be able to do them properly.

But in general it wasn't rebuilt by some elite group of professional builders. Generally nobody needed to be told what to do or how to do it. Stack the stones securely on top of each other until the wall is solid. Off you go.

All they knew was that they needed to rebuild the bit of the wall which was near their house. And you know they'll do a good job because if that's the weak part of the wall, then their family will be the first casualties in an attack.

As Christians this is what we need to do as well.

Everybody in the church should be involved in building the church.

Usually not everyone preaches. Not everyone is a counsellor. Not everyone looks after the finances. But everyone should build the bit of the church near them.

How about you? Are you building the bit of the church near you?

You like cooking? You have some gift there?

Invite people over, from in the church and outside.

Share meals. Help build relationships between them.

One year, twice a week, we invited two families from church for dinner who didn't seem to know each other. Over dinner they got to know each other, and the church gradually grew closer together.

You like fishing?

One of our friends loves fishing, and has a boat. He takes people out on his boat and gets to know them. They have a wonderful time, (and usually even come back with fish for a week). And again, the church is built.

You know stuff about the Bible? About how to be a Christian in this modern world?

Disciple someone. Anyone. Just share your life with them.

It doesn't have to be formal study every Tuesday night.

But share your life. Let them see how you live.

Let them ask questions when they become relevant to them.

You'll change a life.

You had a few babies and raised wonderful teens?

Share that with the young parents in church.

The world is bombarding them with advice on how to raise kids. And it's mostly wrong.

Let them see how you guys live.

Just before I had kids one of the elders in my church invited us around for dinner at least once a week. And Sunday lunch. And just for a coffee... and we got to see how they raised their 5 children.

It was SO different to what I was used to. And I learned so much without a single actual lesson.

So, what is your part of the wall?

READING
Nehemiah 3
Romans 12
1 Corinthians 12

So, what is your part of the wall?
How can you build that?
What do you love doing? Who do you love hanging out with?

We're all different. And that's no accident.
God deliberately designed us that way because we all contribute to building different parts of the church. Just like those New Testament chapters where the church is described as a body and we're all the different parts, each doing our own bit towards helping the whole body function as it should.

How can **you** use the gifts God has given you, and be the person he has made you into, to build the part of the church which is near you?

*built the adjoining section ...
built next to them ... repaired
the next section ...*