

## Next Week's Prayers



"...The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

Jas. 5:16

### ▶ Prayer Exercise

Are you aware of something that you could, or should, do to serve God? Something that perhaps only you have a feeling for?

Make a list of the specific ways you serve God. Did you become involved in any of them without praying first?

This week, strive to identify a new direction you need to move in your service to God. Spend the week praying about it.



DEVELOPING STUDENTS  
OF THE BIBLE

Sunday Morning Bible Class



## ▶ 40 Great Prayers of the Bible

Farmerville  
Church of Christ

Nehemiah's Prayer for Jerusalem  
Nehemiah 1:3-11

Prayer Study #25

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Sunday Morning Bible Class

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# Nehemiah's Prayer for Jerusalem Neh. 1:3-11

Nehemiah was a descendant of the Jewish population that had been taken captive to Babylon in 586 B.C. In 539 B.C. Cyrus the Persian gained control over all of Mesopotamia. He permitted the Jewish exiles to return to the city of Jerusalem. Nearly a century later, in Nehemiah's time, the Persian ruler was Artaxerxes I Longimanus (ruled 465–424 B.C.). Nehemiah was his personal cupbearer (Neh. 1:11).

In 445 B.C. Nehemiah learned of the deplorable condition of the returned exiles in Jerusalem (Neh. 1:2–3). The wall of the city was broken down, the gates were burned, and the people were in distress. Upon hearing this, Nehemiah mourned for many days, fasting and praying to God. His prayer is one of the most moving in the Old Testament (Neh. 1:5–11).

Nehemiah then received permission from Artaxerxes to go to Judah to restore the fortunes of his people. He was appointed governor of the province with authority to rebuild the city walls. Once in Jerusalem, Nehemiah surveyed the walls at night (Neh. 2:12–15). He gave his assessment of the city's condition to the leaders and officials and then organized a labor force to begin the work. (Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

## What Can We Learn?

1. Nehemiah started with prayer! He did not wait, or use prayer as a last resort. Prayer is where he began.
2. Nehemiah acknowledged the sovereignty of God. He counted on the fact that it was God who reigned on heaven's throne.
3. Nehemiah prayed an inclusive prayer — i.e. he used “we” instead of “I.” It was a statement of identity with his people.
4. Nehemiah considered the will and the promises of God, and believed that blessing came by being a part of God's plans.
5. Note that the mourning and fasting (and prayer?) lasted for days.
6. Nehemiah ultimately prayed for God help him in his petition to the king. It reveals that Nehemiah was praying for God's blessing on his decision to act on behalf of his people.
7. Nehemiah was a man of action, but did not act before praying to God.

## Questions to Ponder

1. Read Neh. 1:5. Describe what it says about God's nature. Now read Ps. 111:9. What does it say there about God's nature? Can you figure out why there is a problem with using a certain “title” when referring to preachers?
2. How would you suggest we use the principle of “beginning” with prayer when we see the need to act on something?
3. Would it still be appropriate for us to use Nehemiah's “we” prayer?
4. How might the fact that God has made promises to us become part of our prayers to God?
5. What is the motivational value of a sense of mourning or sorrowing that moves a person to pray?
6. Can you list some things we need to do that might benefit from prayer?

