

# NEHEMIAH'S MODEL FOR DISASTER RECOVERY AS MISSION



## CRISIS

- Jerusalem was destroyed and people taken into captivity.
- Without walls or gates Jerusalem remained semi-deserted, weak, and barely surviving even generations after a remnant returned from its Babylonian captivity.
- The problem required God's people to be mobilized.

## LEADER'S BURDEN (1:3-4; 5-10)

- Nehemiah was distressed and burdened by the crisis.
- He wept, mourned, and prayed, leading him to action.
- First step would test if God was supporting Nehemiah's conviction to lead this recovery effort.
- Nehemiah understood how this effort fit God's bigger plan.

## AFFIRM GOD'S EMPOWERMENT (2:1-10)

- Nehemiah asked his authority to go, was released from obligation, and given approval.
- Asked for additional resources for those in power.
- While king's approval was needed, Nehemiah recognized God's hand was on him to do this work.

## SURVEY THE NEED (2:11-18)

- Nehemiah needed a first-hand, unbiased look at the work to be done. Jerusalem would remain weak if left undone.
- The status quo was a disgrace to God.
- 2:18 key verse

## ORGANIZE & START THE WORK (2:19-3:2)

- Convicted that this is God's work, therefore God will give success. Nehemiah understood God with us.
- Stood against early opposition.
- Ensured leaders (High Priest) visible in the work. (3:1)
- Those impacted by disaster are working in recovery.

## CRISIS (Hurricane Harvey as an Example)

- 52" of rain, largest housing disaster in American history with 400,000 families impacted. Entire neighborhoods destroyed.
- This is a God-sized problem. Can't be fixed by government or by any humanitarian organizations alone.
- The problem requires God's people to be mobilized.

## LEADER'S BURDEN

- Initial reaction may be shock, nothing prepared me for this.
- Pray to seek God's direction and how you might respond?
- Start meeting neighbors. Begin helping while beginning to discern the focus/area of your engagement.
- God is sovereign over this disaster. Pray about what He might accomplish through it? What do you know is His purpose?

## AFFIRM GOD'S EMPOWERMENT

- Connect with ecclesiastical/denominational leadership. Let them know what is on your heart to do. Ask for their help.
- Are church or denominational leaders affirming, supporting, or following your leadership?
- God is with you, empowering your leadership.

## SURVEY THE NEED

- Visit impacted church members. Visit with their neighbors.
- Walk through the community adjacent to the church. Bring church leaders with you. Record your findings.
- Really understand what it's like to be displaced from home.

## ORGANIZE & START THE WORK

- Determine with which families you will start.
- Determine their most pressing needs.
- Communicate needs and work to the church (use media).
- Mobilize the congregation to do God's work (organize, deploy).
- Discern roles & expertise needed: sheltering, mucking out, gutting, laundry, sanitizing home, hosting team, etc.

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## EXPAND THE WORK (3:3-3:32)

- The scope of this disaster required mobilizing most of the people. Leaders are visible and engaged in recovery.
- Not everyone will follow the lead or work hard. (3:5)
- "Each in front of his own house". Motivate to work hard, enable to do proper work. Engaged their family when possible.

## EXPAND THE WORK

- Share what you're doing with other area pastors.
- Discern where the work is complimentary. Respect each other's strengths. Coordinate your volunteers to ensure skills needed on each team, opportunity to transfer skills.
- Shepherd/care for the family through all the work being done.
- Share and celebrate the tangible progress.

## PERSEVERE PAST OPPOSITION & ADDRESS FEARS (4:1-21)

- Initial momentum and hard work shows tangible results.
- Key verse 4:6
- Opposition from those who felt their power would be weakened.
- There may be those who prosper from the status quo, disaster brings injustice to victims. (4:4-5)

## PERSEVERE PAST OPPOSITION & ADDRESS FEARS

- Pray for the community and discern spiritual strongholds.
- Fears: where does funding come from, people with right skills, time to do pastoral responsibilities, physical exhaustion.
- Momentum decreases with distance from disaster.
- Families you serve can be very dysfunctional, can be controlling, unengaged in work.

## COMPLETE THE WORK (6:15-16)

- Amazingly the wall was completed in 52 days.
- Unbelieving nations recognized God's hand in the work.

## COMPLETE THE WORK

- Families find hope and belonging as they return home.
- From ugliness of disaster to something beautiful, restored.

## MISSION – SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION (8:1-13:31)

- Disaster was used by God to bring transformation.
- Restored walls and gates allowed more people to settle, blessing the city & creating the context for spiritual awakening.
- The work was a witness to unbelieving nations.
- God's people united and mobilized to work together under pressure results both in spiritual hunger and an opportunity for spiritual revitalization.

## MISSION – MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST

- Community sees congregations tangibly spread God's love.
- Volunteers see past barriers that divide: race, religion, money.
- Demonstrating compassion engages head, heart and hands – it is being like Jesus, it is practicing discipleship.
- Expands the church's presence and passion for the community.

