

Lessons from Nehemiah: Gathering for Worship with Joy

Nehemiah 12:27-47

27 And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they sought the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, thanksgivings and singing, with cymbals, harps, and lyres.

30 And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and they purified the people and the gates and the wall. 31 Then I brought the leaders of Judah up onto the wall and appointed two great choirs that gave thanks. One went to the south on the wall to the Dung Gate. 38 The other choir of those who gave thanks went to the north, and I followed them with half of the people, on the wall. . . . 40 So both choirs of those who gave thanks stood in the house of God. . . .

43 And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.

44 On that day men were appointed over the storerooms, the contributions, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them the portions required by the Law for the priests and for the Levites according to the fields of the towns, for Judah rejoiced over the priests and the Levites who ministered. 45 And they performed the service of their God and the service of purification, as did the singers and the gatekeepers, according to the command of David and his son Solomon. (Nehemiah 12:27-45, selected)

Come to worship purified.

Purity is essential when entering the presence of the Lord.

See verse 30.

Jewish people have practiced ritual and ceremonial cleansings since God instructed them in Exodus and Leviticus. They often used a mikveh in this practice. People stepped into the waters to fully submerge themselves and stepped out to put on clean clothing.

God-fearing Jews knew not to approach God flippantly or casually, for he is holy and fearsome and must be highly revered.

Jerusalem was the place God had chosen for his name. His temple was there, becoming the central place for his worship. Therefore, it was called the holy city. Dedicating the rebuilt walls and gates communicated Jerusalem's holy distinction, and the people understood the significance.

Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. (Psalm 24:3-4 ESV)

The ritual cleansings didn't work. However, the ceremonies pointed to what could only be completed by Jesus Christ.

All the ceremonies pointed to one who came to fulfill the law, sharing his mercy, grace, and love with us. Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, dwelt among us. He lived perfectly pure; he was sinless and obedient.

Jesus never needed to purify himself. He never entered into the mikveh waters to be clean. However, he entered the baptismal waters of the Jordan River to immerse himself alongside people confessing their sins. There, Jesus signified that he would take mankind's sin upon himself.

He assumed the position of one in need of cleansing even though he was sinless. Jesus entered the baptismal waters for one reason—he was made sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The ceremonial cleansing of ancient times pointed to the fact that people's hearts were spiritually unfit to worship the Holy and Almighty God. They trusted with faith that God would provide the way. Jesus is the fulfillment.

Come to worship purified by Jesus, and purpose to walk in purity.

See 1 John 1:9 and Titus 2:11-12

Come to worship with gladness, expressing it with thanksgivings, songs, and music.

The corporate worship gathering ought to be a place of joy and gladness.

See Psalm 100.

Israel's challenges in Nehemiah's day didn't end with the wall's completion. However, the people had infectious joy and gladness that was a gift of God.

There is no temporal situation that trumps an eternal solution and reality.

Those leading MeadowBrook in worship ought to lead with gladness and joy, celebrating our abundant life in Jesus Christ.

Come to worship open-handed with the joy given by God.

And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away. (12:43)

"The God of all joy activated their inner joy which brought corporate celebration." (John MacArthur)

Christians filled with joy have open hands and hearts. Generosity is an evident sign of joy.



MeadowBrook
CHURCH

Sunday, April 28, 2024 • Pastor Randy Gunter
mbchurch.com

MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON

TODAY at 11:45 AM
at the Conference Center

Lunch for anyone considering church membership. We'll walk through our doctrine, beliefs, and answer any questions you may have.

(Prerequisite for membership)



CONNECT *people to Christ and His church*

**KIDS' CHOIR
SPRING MUSICAL**
**THE GREATEST
HYMN
ON EARTH**
**WEDNESDAY, MAY 8
6:30 PM**

THE well
WOMEN'S MINISTRY
AT MEADOWBROOK

★ ★ **SECRET SUPPER** ★ ★
Ladies' Night Out

**THURSDAY, MAY 9
5:30-8:00 PM**

REGISTER on the
MB App or at
mbchurch.com

GRADUATE
Sunday
MAY 19

ALL High School SENIORS, please REGISTER for our Graduate Sunday online at mbchurch.com. We will recognize our graduates during the 9AM Worship Service and have a special dinner that evening at 6:30 PM. For more info, email matt@mbchurch.com.

KIDQUEST 2024

THE SAME GOD
MALACHI 3:6

JUNE 3-6
9:00 AM - 12:30 PM

for Kids who've completed
Kindergarten - 5th Grade

REGISTER on the MB App
or online at mbchurch.com

GROW *them as disciples and equip them to*

WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS WEEK!

TODAY
8:00-8:20 am - Sunday Morning Prayer Time - W105
9:00 am - Worship - Worship Center
9:00 am - Kids Worship Live - Kids' Theater
10:30 am - Life Group
11:45 am - Membership Luncheon - Conference Center

TUESDAY, APRIL 30
9:30 am - Tuesday Bible Study - on Zoom
10:00 am - GriefShare - Conference Center

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1
5:00 pm - Fellowship Meal - Dining Hall
(Smothered Pork Chops, Pintos, Mashed Potatoes, Fried Okra and Green Tomatoes, Mexican Cornbread; Kids: Hamburgers, Fries, Cookies)
5:30 pm - Kids' Choir - Room 312
6:30 pm - Adult Bible Study on Job, Preschool Ministry, KidStuf, Middle School Worship, High School Worship, Worship Ministry Rehearsal

THURSDAY, MAY 2
10:00 am - Threads of Love Knit/Crochet - Conference Center

SATURDAY, MAY 4
4:00 pm - Kids' Choir Rehearsal - Gym

2024 BIBLE READING

April 28 - Exodus 37-38	May 2 - 1 Corinth 1:10-25
April 29 - Exodus 39	May 3 - 1 Corinth 1:26-2:5
April 30 - Exodus 40	May 4 - 1 Corinth 2:6-16
May 1 - 1 Corinth 1:1-9	

Bible reading plans are available at Guest Connections & Ministry Central

life group
Life together for the Kingdom of God

SUNDAYS at 10:30 AM

Life Group is the best way to connect to the ministry and community at MeadowBrook.

For a listing of our classes, pick up a brochure at Guest Connections.

Welcome

If you are our GUEST, we'd like to **CONNECT** with you! Please fill out a **CONNECTION CARD** and stop by **GUEST CONNECTIONS** for a FREE gift!

SERVE *through missions, ministry and worship*



55+ Lunch at Uptown
Birmingham and Botanical Gardens

Monday, MAY 13
10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Cost: \$5 per person

Register on the MB App or at mbchurch.com/55plus



**MIDDLE SCHOOL
WHITE WATER CAMP**

JUNE 12-14
Cleveland, Tennessee

Register at mbchurch.com
or on the MB App

HIGH SCHOOL

**SMOKY MOUNTAIN
RETREAT**

JULY 8-11
Townsend, Tennessee

Register at mbchurch.com
or on the MB App

Prayer Needs

Cancer/Treatments: Kathy Clayton, Larry Gillis, Rob Morris, Brett Yancey, Kyle Hughes, Tony Howell, Andrea Love, Tommy Thompson, Bob Cross, Bart Watts, Brinley Corbin, Margie Martin, Melissa Griffin, Martha Vaughn

Ongoing Needs: Bebe Pruet, Vernon Tull, Pam Findley, Lanette Albright, Chris Burnette, Lloyd Matthews, Landon Cunningham, Max & Denise Dover, Lola-Ruth Adams, Wes Burnett, Tom Simmons, Danny Maddox, Frank & Peggy Brizendine, Wayne Wood, Anna Moore, Tom Bentley, Mallory Dunn Bramlett, Kathy Thompson, Susan Mize, Aiden Beck, Derell Reaves, Tony Fleming, Bennett Tucker, Cheryl Smith, Jimmy Thompson

- Jeanie Tumlin & Family in the loss of her mother, Jean Tennyson
- Joanne Mathis, Joy Russell & Family in the loss of their cousin
- Loucille Edge & Family in the loss of her mother
- Jeremy Moore & Family in the loss of his grandfather
- Frank Duke - Encompass Rehab
- Tom Simmons - recovering at home
- Elsie Crow, sister of Sharon Draper - ICU Riverview (broken hip & shoulder)