Nehemiah Series 1
Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God
July 11, 2014

I. WELCOME, 15 mins.
Prepare a couple of easy, fun and dynamic icebreaker games to get your group warmed up. Help your cell members to put aside their busy & stressful life. Prepare their minds to come before God.

II. WORSHIP, 20 mins.
Prepare a few songs that help to bring your members to come to the throne of God. As you worship, help your members to encounter with God and experience God’s presence. During this time, the cell leader should also lead the group to pray aloud for the following prayer items:

A. MISSION ORGANIZATION: __________________, and their needs are: ________________
(Please contact the church if you don’t know the needs of the mission organization.)

B. CHURCH MINISTRY:
- 6/15-7/25 Pray America
- 7/19 Women’s Brunch @ 11am in Fellowship Hall.
- 7/31-8/3 Glocal Impact Conference.
- 8/10-9/28 Legacy Journey Class by Dave Ramsey
- 8/24 Family Fun Day

C. New comer: ________________ Identify new comers before cell meeting.
   Sick members, friends or relatives: ________________ Please also discuss how you may show your cares to them.

III. WORD, 45 mins. By sharing God’s word, the group may discuss how you may apply it in everyday life.

A. Sharing message from last Sunday’s sermon: (Try and listen to the sermon on-line once again.)
   1. What is the key message from last Sunday sermon? What did God talk to you through the message?
   2. How would you respond to the message? What action will you take after listening to the message?

B. Discussion Topic: Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God

Our church’s theme for this year is “dream, pray, act,” we are going to be studying Nehemiah, Chapter 1 ~ 6, which depict the story of Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem within 52 days. This scripture clearly shows us how we should dream, pray and act. Nehemiah was concerned about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile. Learning that those who survived the exile and came back to the province were in great trouble and disgrace, the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, and its gates had been burned with fire, Nehemiah immediately interceded on the situation for the Israelites. After praying, God gave Nehemiah a vision which became his burden and dream. Since Nehemiah worked as a high ranking officer in the royal court of Persia, with God’s grace, he set off and took action to rebuild the walls. Nehemiah encountered many difficulties while trying to accomplish this. With his prayers, he was able to overcome all obstacles and eventually, made his dream come true.

1. Nehemiah focused on the Kingdom of God
Nehemiah was among the second generation of Hebrews who remained in the Persian Empire following the Babylonian Captivity. He worked as a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes in the citadel of Susa. It was around B.C. 444.

A) He cared about God’s people and the Holy City (2-3): Nehemiah occupied an important position in the government, but he was concerned about Kingdom’s business all along. Jerusalem, his parents’ homeland, represented the physical state of his countrymen in Judah. When people from Judah coming to Susa, Nehemiah couldn’t help but to question them what happened there. As he learned the situation of the survived remnant being in great trouble and disgrace, the walls of Jerusalem broken down and the gate burned, he sat down and wept. This shows how much he cared about God’s business.

B) He had a great burden (4): The news about God’s people and city agitated him. For many days, he sat down and wept. He was in deep sorrow, so he fasted and prayed. It’s not difficult for us to tell how distressed and grieved he was as he cried for Jerusalem. The news were broken; there was no protection for the people at all. More damage and disturbance could happen in the upcoming days. He was
so overwhelmed by his pain while fasting and praying for Jerusalem. As it was such a heavy load for him, he couldn’t eat or sleep, but weep. Eventually he had to bring the weariness to the Lord. He pleaded that the Lord would gracefully give His mercy and salvation to the people of Israelites.

2. Nehemiah desperately prayed for the Kingdom of God

Nehemiah is a man of prayer. We can learn many things from his prayers.

A) Worshipping and praising the attributes of God (5): Nehemiah praised God’s attributes in an ultimate reverent heart. He declared, “the Lord is the God of heaven, great and awesome. He keeps his covenant with us.” Man may break the covenant, but the Lord would never break it. Our Lord “keeps his covenant of love” with “those who love him and keep his commandments.” What we can learn from this is that our prayers must follow God’s commands and will. God loves His children. When we pray according to God’s will, He will definitely give the best to us. (Ref. Luck 11: 9-13)

B) Confessing the sins from his forefathers (6-7): Nehemiah prayed before God day and night for the Israelites, for himself and for his forefathers. He confessed to God that all the people had disobeyed the commandments issued by Moses. They did not follow God’s commands, decrees or laws. Sin has always been roadblock in our prayers, they block us from God. As we come before God and confess our sins to him, God is faithful and just and will forgive us of our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. Until then, the prayers from us will be channeled to God.

C) Clinging to God’s promises (8-9): Nehemiah held fast to God’s promises (Ref. Deut. 30:1-5). As we return to God, closely follow his commandments. God will gather His people scattered or kept captive. He is capable of bring them all back together, to the residence he has assigned – Jerusalem. The promise from God comes with a condition, that is, following God’s commands. Many times we simply utter our desires to God without understanding God’s will. Nehemiah showed us how to pray according to God’s will, hold fast to God’s promise, follow God’s commands, and respect God’s heart, God will for sure bring His people to the residence where he assigned.

D) Praying that God would listen to our prayers (10-11): What Nehemiah prayed was not for his personal needs but for all the Israelites. The Israelites are God’s people. They have been saved by God’s great power and almighty hands. Brothers and sisters, we too, are ransomed by God through Jesus’ holy blood. That makes us all children of God. We are God’s servants with fear for God. We should all pray together and intercede with a reverent and fearful heart. As we pray together, God will be attentive to our prayers and will answer them, for he loves us.

3. Nehemiah understood the position assigned to him by God (11):

Being a cupbearer, Nehemiah had to taste (either for quality or for poison or for both), carry, and serve wine to his master. A royal cupbearer was not just a personal servant but also a trusted confidant and advisor. It was God’s arrangement to put Nehemiah in this position so that he may be a person of importance and influence. Nehemiah understood the position he was assigned to by God and was willing to work in collaboration with God to accomplish God’s mission. Just as Esther was put in a position as queen, “who knows but that she has come to her royal position for such a time as this?” (Es. 4:14) We should trust that God has put us in different positions for a purpose. Let’s pray that God would give us opportunities so that we make an impact to our world and accomplish the mission of Kingdom.

Discussion: (Please pick the questions that are suitable for your cell group’s needs.)

1. What are you most concerned and are burdened with?
2. How do you tell Nehemiah is greatly burdened with God’s people and city?
3. From Nehemiah’s prayer, which part most touches you? What do you learn from it? Why?
4. Nehemiah understood the position God assigned him. Do you know your position, too? What can you do to be an impact to your world?
5. Set your cell group apart to two in a group, share with one another his/her burden and position. Pray for each other for fulfilling God’s will.

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you and we praise you. Thank you for using Nehemiah and teach us to care about Kingdom’s business as well as the positions we are assigned to. O Lord, protect us; open our hearts to Kingdom’s business. May your will be done! Let the burden of spreading the Gospel root in our hearts. Let Kingdom’s business be our prayer and our vision. Through continuous prayers, we are to become an impact from where we are and our dreams will come true through actions. Thank you, Lord. We pray in Jesus’s name. AMEN!

IV. WORK (Pray for each other), 10 mins.

Please break into group of 2 or 3 to pray for each other’s needs.