

WHY CELEBRATION IS ESSENTIAL IN EQUIPPING

Equipping the Next Generation, pt. 2 / Nehemiah 12:1-47

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Introduction: The book of Nehemiah seems to end in an anticlimactic way. This downward trend begins in chapters 11 and 12 with some lists of apparently random names. However, if we read these chapters from a 5th century BC mindset, we realize that Nehemiah is modeling a value that's crucial to the equipping process: People matter to God. The lists prove it. There are no little people. Everyone has value. As we equip the next generation, our children and grandchildren need to grasp this. They need to see ordinary people living extraordinary lives of faith. In the previous chapter, Nehemiah modeled the importance of a counter-cultural mindset: We're in the world but not of it. In this chapter, Nehemiah models the importance of celebration: We carefully plan times to celebrate the goodness of God. As we equip the next generation, we need to ask ourselves, "Where will our children and grandchildren see us celebrating? And how will they see us celebrating?" In other words, what will they see in us that feels like life and excitement to them? Celebration is important to God. We know this because God builds feasts and festivals into Israel's yearly calendar. Some of those feasts required many days off so that the people could enjoy themselves in the presence of the good God they served. Moreover, these feasts had a strong influence on the kids. Festivals like Passover and Tabernacles evoked the same kinds of feelings that we might have at Thanksgiving or Christmas. In this story, we see that godly celebration honors the past, even as it anticipates God's continued work in the future.

1. Context

2. Celebration

Nehemiah 12:1-47

3. *Comprehension*
Psalm 147:2-6

4. Idea

5. Takeaways