

## Fast and Praying for Eureka

Following the model given by Nehemiah, let's covenant together to fast and pray for the city of Eureka and for our church as a city within the city. Set aside one day each week during this series to skip a meal and spend the time praying that God would do an incredible work in our area. Use Nehemiah 1:5-11 as a model to follow as you pray. The following can guide you as you set aside time to pray for our city and church each week. Let's see what God will do!

### Praise and worship of Jesus (verse 5)

Nehemiah begins his prayer by praising God. He speaks of God's greatness and his love. Praise is not our attempt to butter God up stroking his ego. Rather, our praise helps us see God clearer, and realize that the only hope we have is the very nature and omnipotence of God. As you pray, begin by thinking about and acknowledging the character and greatness of God.

### A cry to God to act (verse 6)

\_\_\_\_\_ Nehemiah asks God to hear him and see him, which is a strange request if we believe God is all-knowing and sovereign. The language in the prayer is not presupposing that God has gone deaf and blind. Rather, it is covenant language, asking God to engage his people in relationship and act on their behalf (see Exodus 2:23-24). Nehemiah has come to the point of desperation, knowing that the only hope is if God will see their struggle, hear their cry, and act on their behalf.

Are you desperate for God to act? Do we need to ask God to break our hearts and help us realize that the walls in our culture are really down? Be sure to include a cry to God as the only hope for Eureka.

### Confession (verse 6b-7)

The next step for Nehemiah the open confession of sin. Still, what is curious here is that he confesses not only his own shortcomings, but also the sin of the people. His example reminds us that as followers of Jesus, we cannot overlook the sin in our church and culture as someone else's problem. Jesus came and died for sin that was not his own. Nehemiah confesses the sin of his people, even though he personally may not have been guilty. This means that he

feels the weight and desires to see God's forgiveness for these people. As you pray, confess your sin, but remember to confess and lift up the sin in our church and in our culture. Here are some issues of sinfulness that I see in the culture of Eureka. Confess these, and you may come up with more... a lot more. We need God's forgiveness individually, but also as a city.

- Consumerism - We live in a culture that is driven by getting more and more stuff. Success is often defined in terms of houses, cars, clothes...
- Men who are not leading their families
- Divorce and broken families and homes
- Parents pushing kids to live for things that do not matter - nothing wrong with sports, dance, orchestra, etc., but these are not the ultimate thing
- The religion vaccine - a large percentage of Eureka-ites are religious, but for many, they get just enough religion to be immune to the real thing.
- Idolatry of goodness - The city is full of good people, who are far from God but depend on their goodness for their hope

#### Using Scripture in your prayer (verses 8-9)

Nehemiah quotes from the book of Deuteronomy in his prayer, reminding God of the promises He had made to his people. In your prayer, I want to encourage you to incorporate Scriptures in your prayers. Two ways to do this. First read a passage from the Bible, maybe a Psalm, a Biblical prayer like this one, or a teaching section. But as you read, pray the things in the passage. Second, begin writing down promises that God has given as you encounter them in your regular Bible reading. Then you can quote those promises and call out to God to keep His promises in your life, for our church, and throughout Eureka.

#### Lifting up God's people (verse 10)

Nehemiah asks God to act because of his people. God raises up a people for his glory and purpose, and then uses these people to demonstrate his glory in the culture. Be sure to spend time praying for Genesis, the elders, Mike as he prepares to preach each week, and for our mission in Eureka. Pray that we would be a city within this city of Eureka. Pray that God would give us a passionate love for the city

of Eureka and the people. Pray that God would give us gates by which we can reach out to the city and live out the Gospel.

#### Prayer for the Holy Spirit to act (verse 11)

In verse 11, Nehemiah prays that God would “give success”. The word here is used throughout the Old Testament to refer to times when the Holy Spirit broke into people’s lives with power in order to act. Nehemiah is crying out for the power and the presence of the Spirit of God as he follows God’s call. Ephesians 5:17-18 tells us that we should be filled with the Holy Spirit (continually). In Acts 1:8, Jesus promised his disciples that they would be filled with power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them. Pray earnestly asking God to send His spirit to us in power, and that He would act to break through and change our lives and others in Eureka.

#### Prayer for the culture and leaders (verse 11)

Nehemiah closes by asking God to change the heart of “this man” so that when Nehemiah can get a hearing before him. The man which Nehemiah is referring is King Artaxerxes, the leader of the Persian Empire. In your prayers, be sure to pray for the people and the leaders in Eureka. Pray for your neighbors, by name if you know them. Pray for teachers, police officers, firefighters, business leaders, and others who work and serve in our community. Here is a list of some of the leaders for your prayers.

- Ken Coffey - Mayor
  - Craig Sabo - City Administrator
  - Bob Berry, Wes Sir, Bob Kee, Marilyn Leistner, Sharon Britt, Don Beckerle - Aldermen
  - Mike Wiegand - Chief of Police
  - Greg Brown - Fire Dept. Chief
  - Shelly Hulser - Chamber of Commerce Director
  - Dr. Jim Wipke - Principal, Eureka High School
  - Debbie Brandt - Principal, LaSalle Springs Middle School
  - Sharon Jackson - Principal, Blevins Elementary
  - Brian Gentz - Principal, Eureka Elementary
  - Dr. Mary Kleekamp - Principal, Geggie Elementary
  - Missy Rathmann - Eureka Parks Dept. Coordinator
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