

FUTURE BUILDERS

Discussion Notes

DREAMING THE FUTURE

This series is focused on the future and how we can help build it. However, many of use feel like the future is out of our hands. It can feel threatening, worrying or even depressing.

- What do you think of when you think of 'the future'?
- What do you think about your future specifically? Is it something you are excited about, nervous about or do you not really think about it all?
- Do you think the future is in your hands?

A common theme throughout this series is the idea that we should: "pray as if it all depends on God, work as if it all depends on you." Nehemiah was a very practical guy but he also prays constantly - 14 recorded times in total.

- Do you lean towards one of these two more than the other? Which can you get better at?

Philip explained that there are 4 steps to getting a vision for our lives of how we can 'build the future': hearing, hurting, dreaming, driving.

Hearing

First of all, Nehemiah hears the pain and suffering of the people in Jerusalem. He hears the distress of the people of Jerusalem and is moved to make a change. The same is true for us, however there can be a lot of factors that stop us from hearing the problems clearly. For example, you might be surrounded by a 'Christian bubble' that prevents you from hearing clearly.

- What stops us from hearing the pain around us? Do you think the Christian bubble affects you? Does it stop you having a vision for Bristol?
- How can we change this? What steps can we take to hear clearly?

Hurting

Nehemiah doesn't stop at just hearing. In order to build a better future we have to get to a point where we can't stand the way things are at the moment. We need to develop the empathy that Nehemiah displays whereby he can't help but be moved to make a difference.

- Have you experienced this for yourself? Is there something that you are compelled to change?
- What stops us from experiencing this? i.e. comfort zones, compassion fatigue etc.

Dreaming

Philip explained that in order to build a better future, we need to dream of a better future. We can say 'it could be like this...'. We dream of a better future by being in the presence of God, it is hear that the Holy Spirit inspires us to look beyond what we currently see and see the possibilities.

- How much does spending time in God's presence factor into how you think about the future?
- How do we make sure we are making God's presence the starting point for our dreams about the future?
- Can we be sure that dreams of the future are inspired by God? How do we know it isn't just us?

Driving

Finally, when we have a dream of what the future looks like, we can drive towards it. For Nehemiah, this looked like taking the risk of asking the king to allow him to rebuild the walls even though he had already said that Israel couldn't do this. Interestingly, Nehemiah was the cupbearer to the king, meaning he had a great deal of responsibility and favour with the king. Philip explained that it was crucial that Nehemiah's job isn't his identity, it is an opportunity.

- What opportunities do you have in your life that can help you build the future?
- Is your workplace an opportunity, or does it feel more like an identity - a label that defines who you are rather than what you could do to further the vision?
- What does it actually look like to be 'driven' by a vision as Philip described? Do you have any experience of this?

People in your hub group are probably at all sorts of different places with 'vision' and what it means to 'build a better future'. Some may feel like they have a vision they are already driving towards, whereas others may feel quite powerless or like they haven't even started on this journey.

Spend some time reflecting on this as a hub and then pray together. It might be that individual members of your hub have a burning passion that you want to pray for. Or, you may want to practice prophesying for each other - it could be that as you pray God reveals a bit more of that vision for your future. Either way, this is good chance to share the things that you are passionate about and spur each other on in that.