

## **Nehemiah the person**

- God's main methods are not programmes or projects – but people.
- Not a professional 'clergyman' but a layman – a Civil Servant! (Cupbearer)
- An honest person – no pretence. What you see was what you got!
- God-fearing – regarded God as awesome and holy
- A man with a heart in and for God's kingdom – ultimate reality.
- Spiritual heritage was important 'my ancestors graves'

## **Nehemiah's strategy**

- He waited four months: from Chisleu (1:1) to Nisan (2:2). Not in a hurry or pressured by other people's agendas and priorities. Jesus was like that (Mark 1:35-39; John 11:6)
- He felt deeply and inwardly for the situation (1:4), did not feel that though it was 300 miles away it was not his business. We weep with those who weep.
- He prayed – that was the first thing he did.
- The structure of Nehemiah's prayer:
  - Worship (1:4-5) based on God's revelation of himself. God's character as the ground of his hope. (1:4)
  - Confession (1:6-7)
  - Absolution (1:8-9)
  - Petition and intercession (1:11)

## **The answer to his prayer**

- The king granted his petition to have leave of absence to go to Jerusalem.
- But more – granted him safe passage, letters of commendation
- The king provided materials. God uses unbelievers for his mission.

## **A fact-finding reconnaissance (2:11-17)**

- Went round the city to see for himself what needed repairing
- Problems or potential?

## **'The ideal and the actual'**

*There are two things, the actual and the ideal.*

*To be mature is to see the ideal and live with the actual.*

*To fail is to accept the actual and reject the ideal,*

*and to accept only that which is ideal,*

*and refuse the actual is to be immature.*

*Do not criticize the actual because you have seen the ideal.*

*Do not reject the ideal because you see the actual.*

*Maturity is to live with the actual but hold on to the ideal.*

*(Derek Prince)*