

## Supporting Joshemiah

Okay. I couldn't help myself. Today is an exciting day for the Brownsburg Church. Joshua Webber is now a member of the Brownsburg congregation along with his wife Samantha. But they are not only our newest members, Josh has come to work as an evangelist. To help us prepare for this transition and new work, Josh has taught us some excellent lessons from the book of **Nehemiah**. Even today, he is going to provide what I'm sure will be an outstanding lesson from that book on the congregation working together as a team. Even though Josh is not coming to be the governor of the Brownsburg congregation, he is coming to help build walls in the Lord's heavenly Jerusalem (cf. **Hebrews 12:22**). Josh is not coming to preach sermons. He won't be in the pulpit all the time or even half of the time. He is coming to help build up the temple of the Lord through outreach and teaching the lost. His role is to help build up the heavenly Jerusalem by adding new bricks to the wall, not shaping the bricks that are already there. But he isn't coming to do the work of building by himself. He is coming to help lead the congregation in wall building. That means he needs the support of the congregation, and he needs it quick. Thus, my silly name for this article. For this congregation, Josh's coming is a bit like the coming of Nehemiah. So, consider some of the support Nehemiah received from his brethren and see what you can learn about supporting Josh.

*Support him with information.* In **Nehemiah 1:1-3**, Nehemiah's brother and other men from Judah visited Nehemiah and gave him the information about Jerusalem's continued broken down state. Nehemiah couldn't pray about or help with what he didn't know was needed. You can support Josh with information. Now, let's be brutally honest. In any congregation, there are disgruntled members who are upset about something. Let me tell you what information Josh doesn't need. He doesn't need your sense of "what's wrong with the congregation." Here is the information he does need to do his work. He needs to know where you are in evangelistic desire, ability, and goals. He needs to know what kind of help you need from him to be better able to work in evangelistic outreach to the lost. Don't try to make him figure that out on his own. Let him know what you can do, what you want to do, what you need help doing.

*Support him with resources.* I know this comes from Artaxerxes and not from Nehemiah's brethren, but **Nehemiah 2:7-8**, demonstrates that work often takes resources. Josh's role in the congregation doesn't just include getting to the church building. He's going to be doing a lot of driving to places conducting studies. Imagine how a gas card now and then might help him out. He's probably going to be having lunch meetings with prospects and coffee with contacts. Imagine how a gift card to Starbucks, Chick-fil-a, or another location might be of help to him. At the same time, he's going to want to provide people opportunities to have studies to attend. Imagine what great opportunities might come if you provide the resource of your home for a home Bible study in your neighborhood.

*Support him with your presence.* In **Nehemiah 2:12**, Nehemiah went out to inspect the walls. But he didn't go alone. Some of the men went with him. Josh can use your presence. It's tough for an evangelist to move into a community and get to know people when his workplace is the church building. Go alongside him by taking him to your friends and family. Introduce him to people with whom he can share the gospel. When he is working, go with him. Be involved in the study opportunities he develops. Go alongside him as he studies with people. Not only will that support him in his own work and building, but it will help you learn how to work alongside him.

*Support him by being ready to work.* In **Nehemiah 2:18**, God's Word says, "And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, 'Let us rise up and build.' So they strengthened their hands for the good work" (ESV). Today and in future lessons, Josh is going to be telling you about the hand of God and the good work He has planned for you. You can support Josh by strengthening your hands for the work. Don't step aside, step up. The shepherds haven't hired a man to do the evangelism for the church, but to help lead the work that the members of the church are doing. Are you strengthening your hands to work?

*Support him by supporting one another.* In **Nehemiah 5**, the good work that the Israelites had done in wall building was almost brought to nothing, not by the enemies in the land around them, but from the internal struggles of the Jews with each other. I highly doubt there is a whole lot of lending and enslaving going on among the Christians here in Brownsburg. But understand how detrimental to the Lord's work internal feuding and struggles can be. Put the good of the congregation and your brethren before your own personal interests and support the Lord's work. That will support Josh's work as an evangelist in major ways.

*Support him by...well...supporting him.* In **Nehemiah 6:10-14**, we see some folks who weren't supporting Nehemiah, but were hindering him. By contrast we can see what Josh needs. He needs support. The fact is for every preacher, the enemy is doing all he can to cause him to fear, get discouraged, be distracted. Despite the fact that

Josh is an excited fireball, he and Samantha will be no exception to these attacks. He doesn't need Shemaiahs and Noadiahs who heap on bad advice and more fear and discouragement. He needs God-fearing Hananis and Hananiahs (see **Nehemiah 7:2**) who will be a support. He will need folks who will listen when he is down, folks who will encourage when he is discouraged, folks who will pray for him and his wife, folks who will cry with him when things don't go the way he wants, folks who will rejoice with him when things go well, folks who will minister to him and Samantha while they are in the midst of their own spiritual growth.

Nehemiah led the way for building the wall, but he did it with a lot of support. I am convinced that Josh is going to do great work among this congregation, but he won't be able to do it alone. Be a support and help build the walls.

—Edwin L. Crozier