

# PRESCRIPTION FOR CHRISTIAN GROWTH

**TEXT:** Nehemiah 8 (Please read this chapter before continuing)

**INTRO.:** A. It was 70 years since the holy city of Jerusalem had been leveled and the Jews taken captive to Babylon, some 500+ miles to the east. Now some 50,000+ have returned. The city was in ruins, the Temple foundation was re-laid under Ezra and now the walls of the city were rebuilt under Nehemiah. A great day of praise and thanksgiving was planned and Ezra the scribe led the service.

B. While this is an O.T. service and there was no "church" building\* or even a Temple as yet, and some of the things we associate with a service of praise are missing, e.g., music, offerings, etc., there are some parallels we should take notice to and emulate...

(\* The church is never a building in the N.T. It is the assembled believers inside a building. I always chafe when someone refers to our church building as **"the house of God."** The church is never referred to that way in God's Word. That term was used for the O.T. Temple.)

**I. THE PEOPLE ARE CALLED TO WORSHIP:** *"as one man..."* (Unity, harmony) v.1

**II. THE CALL FOR GOD'S WORD IS GIVEN:** *"Bring the book of the Law of Moses"* v.1

A. Every Service (& Class) Should have the Bible as the Central Focus

1. The man of God should expound the Word of God, **"preach the Word,"** not his or someone else's philosophies, ideas or illustrations **"with all longsuffering and doctrine"**

**NOTE:** I always find it interesting when the preacher refers to the Greek or Hebrew in a message. 1. Noone in the congregation probably speaks either language. 2. It is especially interesting when the preacher who does so doesn't believe any translation of God's Word is "inspired" or "inerrant". To then refer to the "originals" becomes almost laughable since neither he nor anyone else has seen the autographs. By doing this it means we can't trust the KJB translation and that the preacher knows more than the translators. Unlikely! (It leads to not trusting the Bible we have in our hands. Also the preacher who does this probably doesn't really know either language fluently either. He is probably trusting a concordance to give him a "better translation".)

**Luke 4:4** And Jesus answered him, saying, **It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.**

B. Every Believer Should Gladly Hear God's Words

**Acts 2:41** **Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.**

**ILLUS.:** I love the pastor and people in our church, but I don't come for the fellowship, I come for the food (from the Word)!

**III. THE SERVICE WAS FOR EVERYONE:** *"...all the people"* v.1, *"all ages"* v.2

A. Children Should Be Present: **"...all that could hear with understanding"**

1. The Word must be intelligible to all who come
2. Children should learn the Word early in their lives

**IV. THE SERVICE WAS LONG:** *"...from morning to midday"* v.3

A. Nobody Was Watching the Clock!

B. Nobody Was in a Hurry to Leave

**QUOTE:** "I didn't come to get out, I came to get in!"

**V. THE PEOPLE LISTENED ATTENTIVELY:** *"...all the ears of the people were attentive unto the Book of the Law" v.3*

- A. This is the Purpose for a Service!
- B. Otherwise Stay Home & Sleep There!

**VI. THE PULPIT WITH GOD'S WORD WAS CENTRAL!** *"...and Ezra the Scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood"*

- A. The Central Thing in a Service Should Be the Pulpit: v.4
- B. The "Geography" of a Place of Worship & Praise is Important!

**NOTE:** The pulpit should always be the center of focus in the center of the platform. In liturgical churches it is usually off to one side. They may read some Scripture there, but will go to the pulpit on the other side of the platform to "preach".

- C. But the Most Important Thing is the Preaching of the Word! ***"Preach the Word!"***

**VII. THE PEOPLE STOOD TO HEAR GOD'S WORD: v.5**

- A. God's Name is Holy, but He has Magnified His Word Above His Name!

**Ps.138:2** *I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.*

- B. His Word Demands our Attention & our Action!

**VIII. THE SERVICE WAS EMOTIONAL: v.6**

- A. The People Shouted ***"Amen! Amen!"***
- B. They Lifted Up Their Hands in Praise
- C. They Bowed Their Heads in Worship

**IX. THE WORD OF GOD WAS TAUGHT TO THE PEOPLE: v.9**

- A. We Need to Have a Better Understanding of the Word After Each Service **vv.3,7,8,12,13**

**NOTE:** This concept was the most important in my years as pastor. My charge was **to "feed the flock, over the which God had made me the overseer"** with His Word, not my philosophies, ideas, personal illustrations, stories, etc., etc.

**CONCL.:** Question #1 – How does our church measure up?!

Question #2 – How are YOU doing?!