



### Nehemiah 2:11-18 New Revised Standard Version

<sup>11</sup> So I came to Jerusalem and was there for three days. <sup>12</sup> Then I got up during the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. The only animal I took was the animal I rode. <sup>13</sup> I went out by night by the Valley Gate past the Dragon's Spring and to the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that had been broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire. <sup>14</sup> Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool; but there was no place for the animal I was riding to continue. <sup>15</sup> So I went up by way of the valley by night and inspected the wall. Then I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. <sup>16</sup> The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing; I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest that were to do the work.

<sup>17</sup> Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, so that we may no longer suffer disgrace." <sup>18</sup> I told them that the hand of my God had been gracious upon me, and also the words that the king had spoken to me. Then they said, "Let us start building!" So they committed themselves to the common good.



"You either are or you aren't! There's no in between!" Such wording has been used to describe commitment. It is simple, yet bold and honest. Simple in the sense that it is memorable, but bold and honest because it puts to the test much of what people consider to be commitment in our present world. Commitment is defined as a wholehearted devotion or complete loyalty to a cause, person, or task. It provides no room for "fence-sitting" or partial support. A person has to make a conscious decision to be in or out, yes or no, let's do this or I'd rather not. This is true for all facets of life and especially so within the community of faith. However, it is this arena which experiences less intentionality and mixed reactions given the circumstances.

When you and I think about our lives and take inventory of our commitments, what do we come up with? Family? Job? Leisure? How about church? It often seems as though church falls down the pecking order of our priorities. Even if we do think about church, it may very well be that our commitments are out of kilter. Maybe we are committed to matters of faith, but on our terms. Perhaps we look out for our own spiritual health and wellbeing to the neglect of others. It can be easy to want what we want and focus upon what church can do for us or else.

In today's sermon text from Nehemiah 2, we are informed that the people not only said "Let's get to work!", but also "committed themselves to the common good." They did not simply commit themselves to any and everything. If they had committed to selfish purposes or all things in general, they would have accomplished nothing. This was not to be the kind of undertaking in which each person could look out for him or herself. In order to be a success, there had to be a common focus and commitment to ensure everything was orderly and in line with God's purposes.

"Being committed to the common good" need not be limited to the rebuilding efforts in Jerusalem centuries before Christ. This should continue to characterize our efforts to carry out the work of God's Kingdom even now. But, how do we go about this?

1. Before we can commit to anything, we must know our purpose.
2. Commitment to a purpose calls for more than emotional hype.
3. Our attitude goes a long way in the execution of our purpose.

**Prayer Pebble:** Lord, grant me a clear vision and right attitude in order that I might be better committed to your Kingdom work.