

WCK gave a very brief review of Chapter 3. The List with all the workers who engaged in the work of rebuilding the wall. He dismissed interpretive attempts that would allegorize (spiritualize) the people or the places (e.g. the names of the gates). Rather, he suggested the following guidelines for drawing meaning out of the list of workers.

1. Coordination of effort. 15x you have the phrase “next to him” and 14x “adjoining”. WCK made the statement, “You cannot have UNEMPLOYMENT in the church without serious IMPAIRMENT.” In the rebuilding of the wall you witness a great level of organized, coordinated effort. Each person played a part that fit together into a remarkable cumulative work.
2. Cooperation. All members were give opportunity. No one was excluded from participating in a meaningful way. How are we in the church? Do we even come close to this level of cooperation?
3. Convenience. At 3:23 we read of Benjamin and Hasshub making repairs “in front of their house.” Nehemiah organized the workers in a way that was convenient given their home responsibilities. So in the church, do we involve people in a way that “fits” with their concerns and the other duties of life?
4. Commendation. All these specific people are mentioned in the Bible. Do we appropriately recognize the good effort and sacrifice of people in the church? It is right acknowledge and thank them.

MEK. The phrase that WCK made a number of times that stuck with me is “unemployment” in the life of the church. Much of my role as a pastor is to equip the saints for the work of ministry. That will vary according to people, gifting, time availability, other responsibilities, and spiritual maturity. But the fact remains that if any congregation is to achieve what God has set before it, there must be a high level of “employment”. Even Nehemiah had some who worked “zealously” (vs. 20 “Baruch son of Zabbai **zealously** repaired another section,”) while others were “reluctant” (vs. 5 “their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors.”). One man works with his daughters, (vs. 12 Shallum son of Hallohesh . . . repaired the next section with the help of his daughters). So even at this point in history there was a recognition of the equality of the role that women played. It was also interesting to me how “teams” were sometimes formed (e.g. “men of Jericho” vs. 2, men of Gibeon and Mizpah vs. 7, etc.) so team ministry is an enduring principle. So this really is a timely picture for the church when we consider what it actually says, (and avoid the tendency to allegorize or draw other meanings from the text.)