



### **Conversation Starter/Questions** (10 minutes)

When was the last time you were homesick and what were you most “missing” and why?  
What makes you feel homesick?

### **Sermon Based Questions** (15–20 minutes)

- Read through Nehemiah 1 & 2 as a group. **Did anything stand out to you about Nehemiah or in this section of scripture?**
- You will notice in the text that Nehemiah was not skilled in construction as a profession, yet utilized his gifts and took up the challenge to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. He stood in the gap where there was a need and he “could” fill it. **What are your gifts that you could be, or are, using in the church?**
  - **Are there areas in the Church or in the world that you see a “gap” that needs to be filled, or a need that needs to be met that you don’t feel equipped to handle? How do you think God uses those who don’t feel equipped?**
- I wonder what would have happened had Hanani not shared about the trouble in Jerusalem. Indeed, we need to share so that there can be movement towards healing. **Why is sharing important?**
  - **Do you find it hard to share what you need, or what others may need? Why?**
- **A key part of Nehemiah’s story, and Esther’s from last week, is that they both rose to the challenge that God gave them. What has stopped you in the past from rising to what God is asking you to do?**
  - **Can you think of a time when you or someone you know rose to do something that God was asking them to do? Why was it significant?**
  - **Has there been a time in the past when you think you missed an opportunity to rise up, or rose up for the wrong thing?**

### **Digging Deeper** (20–25 minutes)

- **Is there anything God is asking you to do now? Is something stopping you now?**

- Pastor Thad shared 6 ingredients to his “Recipe for Rising.” **Do you feel like you are missing any of these key ingredients? Why or why not?**
  - Knowing of a need
  - Praying over a need, according to God’s Will
  - Acting in accordance to that need or opportunity
  - Preparation to act
  - A call to action
  - Grit, perseverance, or resilience
- **Has the pandemic affected your ability to rise to what God is asking of you? Why or why not?**
  - Nehemiah grieved for Jerusalem and her people as that great city and her people reflected God to the world and His blessings were a precious promise to Israel from God. **Are you grieved over the declining state of the church in America? Why or why not? In your grief, how are you praying for the church?**
  - A recent question pastor Thad received from this series was, “If God is sovereign, why should we pray?” **Survey your group to see if they have ever had this question and take time to discuss this in your group. Can you think of any verses that may help?** (Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Philippians 4:6, Proverbs 15:8)

## **Challenge and Prayer** (10-15 minutes)

- Challenge yourself to share with your group when things are going tough and begin working on undoing any poor habits you may have begun during the pandemic.
- Pray for the church in America and the world. Pray about your role in helping the church “rise up”!
- Make it a point to “rise up” and fill the gap where ministry is needed—even if for a short time. Pray about calling one of our ministry leaders and ask where you can stand in the gap. Key ministry leaders are: David Baxley/Tami DeLeeuw (Discipleship & Worship); Billy Hestand (Students and Missions); Lisa Cochlin (Kids) and Glenna Lenardson – First Steps and Connections (greeter/usher/starting point)