

'For Southampton' series Part 5 – A Restored Celebration – Remember application notes are about Applying the word – does not matter if all content covered. Focus on application questions and prayer / practical suggestions / discussion and application. Don't worry if the notes are not completed – Have a great week at Life Group.

Opening up...

Sunday's message looked at Restoring a sense of joy and celebration in us as individuals, in our churches and in our society. Can you think of the best celebration you have ever been to? What made it special? What marked it out from other celebrations (? Birthday / Wedding / Party/ dedication etc.) People likely to remember Special celebrations because there was something worth celebrating! (if group small enough go round and share your most memorable celebration).

Digging in...

Read Nehemiah 12v27-43 together.

Is there anything that people immediately want to pull out after reading the text? Anything that particularly challenged from Sunday?

- 1) All Glory belongs to God – v27 – The dedication. Pete spoke about how Nehemiah was recognising God's complete majesty and sovereignty and recognising the wall belonged to him. Contrasted with Saul in 1 Samuel 15 – building a monument to himself. The work of our hands belongs to God.

Apply – Q – What areas of your life have you failed to declare / dedicate back to God? Break into pairs for 3-4 minutes discuss your work etc. and whether God is getting the recognition he deserves.

- 2) An occasion of Great Joy and Thankfulness – Read again v27,31,43. God was the source of their 'Great Joy'. However, on Sunday we spoke about to pursue Joy in the Christian walk is a choice. Paul model deep-seated Joy and celebration in his pursuit of God beyond circumstance particularly in his letter to the church in Philippi.

Apply – Q - Are you known as a Joyful person in your (workplace / neighbourhood / friendship circle / family etc.). If not, why not? What do you need to do to further pursue Joy?

Suggestion - Pray for one another in an 'elephant-style' (everyone prayer for person on right with arm on their shoulder- all prayer out loud at same time) prayer, that we would each be filled with his spirit and pursue him in all things.

- 3) The Celebration Involved Everyone – v28 and 29 – Village and city, v43 children.

Discuss together how good you feel West End is on a Sunday morning at incorporating everyone? Discuss any suggestions for changes in meeting format / worship style etc. Encourage a positive and constructive discussion, focusing on the positives as well as the areas to improve on.

- 4) The Celebration overflowed into the Community v43 ("heard far away")

Also read John 7v38 together. We are called to overflow both individually and corporately and transform our neighbourhoods, transform West End, Southampton and the nations.

Apply – Q – What areas is God calling West End to restore celebration to the village?

Q – What area is God calling you individually to restore celebration? (work / neighbourhood etc.)

Pray together that God's Holy Spirit would fill us up so much that it would overflow and affect our community.