

Recap of 6/16/19 (Nehemiah 10:32-39):

1. "Nehemiah had restored the walls of the city. He then turned to his most important task: restoring the relationship of the people of Judah with God" (Richards). They not only needed a restored wall but a restored spiritual commitment.
2. The priority of worship in the lives of the Israelites had been supplanted by fear and instability and a materialist view of life. God required first place (10:35-37), but the reality was that they were neglecting Him by neglecting the Temple and its ministries. It was a vicious cycle: the people weren't supporting the priests, Levites, and other Temple servants and so they had to leave Jerusalem to provide for their families, thus neglecting their Temple duties. Worship of God had to be restored to first place. The people needed to be willing to sacrifice to support the priests, Levites, etc.
3. In verses 32-39, "The people paid for offerings; supplied wood, and supported priest, musicians, maintenance men, etc." (Life Change Bible Studies). The people committed to giving to support the Temple.
4. The Levites weren't exempt from giving. They were to give a tenth of the tenth given to them to the Priests (Numbers 18:26). It was the privilege of the Levites to give to the ministry of the priests. As expressed by one writer: "Those who minister must not be robbed of the joy of giving too."
5. "The amount that a man gives in proportion to his income is a sure gauge of the genuineness and depth of his religious life. (Tozer)
-"Sacrifice remains a significant measure of our commitment to and love for the Lord. The giving of many Christians goes beyond tipping God out of their excess, to tightening their belts in order to contribute more." (Richards)
6. Today we are not required to worship at a man-made Temple. New Testament believers are the building blocks of God's spiritual temple, as well as priests representing Him to the world and the world to Him (1 Peter 2:1-10). Believers' bodies are the Temple (the Holy of Holies) of the Holy Spirit. Believers are to offer themselves to God as a spiritual sacrifice (Romans 12:1,2). We don't neglect the Word, prayer, personal time with God, worship services, using our gifts and talents to serve others. That's how we keep God first today, in the Church age.