



The Time is Now  
"Revival"  
12<sup>th</sup> March 2017

## Overview

Sunday was the second last message in this series entitled "The Time is Now." Having built the wall, the people turn upwards. And they long to return to the relationship with God they had in the past. So they ask Ezra the priest to read to them from the word of God. And what followed ... revival!

## Getting to Know You

Steve said that revival is simply about getting closer to God. Pick one time in your life when you felt particularly close to God. What happened (internally and externally) that caused that closeness? Tell others about it.

## Digging Deeper

- Revival came from the people, not the leaders (Read 8:1)

Thinking back over the story of Nehemiah, what had happened that had drawn the people together, and had drawn them to God?

Some people think that those two things – drawing together and drawing to God – almost always go together. Do you agree? Why / why not?

Do you think we are too individualistic in our relationship with God?

- They were hungry to hear God's word. (Read 8:3,5,8)

How did the people show their hunger for God's word?

How do we show our hunger for God's word? How could we? What could change in our groups and individual lives that would increase our hunger for the word?

- They intentionally celebrated (Read 8:9-11,17)

The remarkable thing about the Israelites is that they were crying and weeping, and then (following the leaders' advice) they deliberately chose to rejoice. Rather than being ruled by their emotions, they overcame them. And this led to the biggest party Israel had had in centuries!

Can you think of examples in your life where you were deeply feeling one emotion, but then deliberately changed that by a conscious decision? How did you go about doing that?

- They remembered God's graciousness to them (Scan over 9:5-32)

When you look back at your life, what is the one event or episode where God's graciousness to you was the most clear? Tell others the story of what happened.

Would any of these be good stories to tell during our Godspace series, or to go into the book we might be doing about our stories with God. Encourage each other if you think one (or lots, or all!) of these stories could have a wider audience.



### **Taking it Home**

In the sermon, Steve talked about one of the small group leaders from his previous church, who said "It's funny you know. Most Christians want to get closer to God, but they often don't want to do the things that would bring you closer to God."

1. What are the things that your group is doing at the moment that are bringing you closer to God? What other things could you do / what could you change in your group habits that would bring you closer to God?
2. What will you do? Can you make some decisions / commitments together?

Perhaps you could follow the example of the Israelites and write down the specifics. (See 9:39-10:38)



### **Prayer**

"When revival happens, it almost always starts with the people."

Take some time today to pray for each other in your group, that you would draw closer to God, and so experience revival together. Pray for our church as well, that God would move us towards him as a wider community.