

LEADER AS STEWARD | Leader's Guide

How leadership requires intentional stewarding of resources

Note

This is a sketch of a steward (or manager) for a leader. Nehemiah carries a vision, but more importantly, he carefully plans and executes a huge task—rebuilding the broken walls of ruined Jerusalem. Rather than focusing on the outcome, this study focuses in on his process. The aim is that students will feel challenged to assess their own resources and their posture in stewarding these resources on the individual as well as communal levels. Nehemiah took great risks and made sacrifices. How does the Lord invite us to do the same? We can act as careful stewards with the hope that we could build a place on campus where everyone can thrive. As we think long term towards the development as our students as lifelong disciples, this lays the groundwork for stewardship of resources towards any vision God may be calling them to as they contemplate vocation, finances, gifts, time and more.

Scripture Context

The year is 445 B.C., about 150 years after the Babylonians had destroyed Jerusalem and deported most of the city's people. Ezra has rebuilt the temple, but the city walls, which had also been rebuilt, now lie in ruins again. This section of Nehemiah tells us how one man responded to the desperate situation.

Read Together: Nehemiah 1:1-2:8

Discussion Questions

1. Take some time to make observations and ask questions about this passage.
2. What impresses you about Nehemiah's prayer in chapter 1?
 - *Passionately weeps and mourns*
 - *Prays and fasts for days on end*
 - *Confesses not only his own sins but the sins of his ancestors*
 - *Boldly claims God's promises*
3. What evidence do you see in chapter 2 that would indicate that Nehemiah has planned ahead, in addition to the time he spent praying?
 - *Note the detailed requests that he made to the king*
4. How is Nehemiah a part of the answer to his own prayers?
 - *He is cupbearer to the king—a position of access and influence*
 - *He makes a plan of action and is willing to make personal sacrifices to see it come to pass*

Putting It Into Practice

Chose 1-2 of the following stories to discuss as a group and answer the following questions:

- What sorts of risks are the individuals in danger of?
- What resources are available to the individuals? How could each person or community better steward their resources?

Story #1

Neal transfers from a community college where he had spent a lot of last year partying and struggling with his grades. He starts this year with a strong conviction that he needs to prioritize his faith and his academics more, so he plugs in with InterVarsity. He genuinely enjoys his time with this community and makes a few friends in his small group. As the semester gets busier, Neal keeps skipping out on time with his small group and Core Group gatherings in favor of working on homework. He feels that his relationship with God is suffering but keeps promising himself he'll budget his time better next week. He knows the time he spends on social media could be scaled back but struggles to stay focused on his homework. When his InterVarsity friends check in with him, Neal sometimes neglects to respond as he feels guilty and ashamed. His small group leader offers to meet up over lunch and reconnect, but Neal declines. As Winter Retreat approaches, he's feeling like he should probably sit it out and hopes to attend the next retreat instead.

- *Neal isn't connecting how he's spending his time with the impact on his spirituality and his connection to community.*
- *Neal could take more action with lining up his priorities and how he's spending his time.*

Resources:

- *Neal has a spiritual community willing to come alongside him in his faith.*
- *His InterVarsity friends are open and available to him.*

Story #2

Jessica and Devonte have been building a small group community together. They had 8 different new students showing up over the first month and then experienced a sharp drop in attendance. They faithfully text everyone each week before small group. It's just been the two of them plus a core member who was involved last year for the past few weeks. Jessica feels frustrated by these people not showing up to small group when some of them are still making the time to go to Core Group. She tells Devonte she knew coming in she wouldn't be good at leading a small group. Devonte is alarmed to hear this and wonders if they should both throw in the towel as he doesn't want to lead alone.

- *Neither seems to be very connected to why some of these small group attendees have stopped showing and how to shepherd through outreach.*
- *Rather than discuss and problem solve, Devonte is resigning himself to quitting in fear of the worst-case scenario.*
- *Jessica is taking this roadblock as an indication that she's not cut out to lead.*

Resources:

- *The Holy Spirit—Jessica and Devonte can pray about this situation.*

- *Reconnect with the small group attendees who they see at Core Group*
- *Enlist their core member in helping pray for and rebuild the small group*
- *Coaching from a staff*

Story #3

Diamond has been building a friendship with Tiana, a classmate. She senses the Lord inviting her to more spiritual intentionality with Tiana as Tiana has expressed curiosity around Christianity and has no church background. As they deepen their friendship, Diamond begins to see the ways that Tiana is in a hard place in her life—and in her desire to see Tiana open to Jesus, Diamond tries to be a help and support in any way she can. She drives her drunken friend home from parties, stays up late texting her when she's mentally spiraling, and last night went to bed way too late helping a frantic Tiana with an overdue work assignment.

Diamond knows Tiana needs Jesus in her life but feels so overwhelmed by her friend's struggle that she's considering taking a break from the friendship altogether.

- *Diamond is overwhelmed carrying this load and wants to flee.*
- *Diamond is trying to be the solution to all Tiana's problems.*

Resources:

- *The Holy Spirit—Diamond can be ministering to Tiana in prayer as well.*
- *Christian Community—Diamond can enlist the help of her community in coming alongside Tiana.*
- *Mental healthcare—Diamond could encourage her friend to seek professional help.*
- *Boundaries—Having healthy boundaries in their friendship could not only make it more sustainable, it could also help Tiana move towards healthy change.*

Application Questions

1. What are some of the resources we each have to offer our community? (Time, money, skill, emotional energy, relational energy, etc.)
2. What are some of your resources you are most protective of?
3. What spiritual needs do you see in our chapter community? What are some of the resources God has for our chapter?
4. Spiritually our campus is desperate for Jesus. What resources might our chapter have for the campus?