

NEHEMIAH

A BROKEN HEART OVER BROKEN WALLS

**40 Days of Prayer and Fasting
Devotional Guide**

Introduction

Thanks for joining us on this journey of prayer and fasting and reflecting on the book of Nehemiah—a story of holy burden, courageous faith, and God-empowered rebuilding. Just as Nehemiah wept, prayed, and sought the Lord before taking action, we too set aside this sacred time to align our hearts with God’s purposes. These forty days invite us to humbly seek His guidance, repent where needed, and intercede boldly for restoration in our lives, families, community, and nation. May this season awaken in us the same resolve Nehemiah carried: to rise and build by the strength and grace of our faithful God.

We have created this prayer guide to deepen our walk with God and unify us as a body of Christ in prayer. We are so grateful that you have committed to joining us in prayer. Our hope is that your prayer experience grows richer and stronger over the coming weeks. We look forward to seeing the transformation that will come about in your life and the life of our church because of this time spent in prayer!

As you encounter God during these next six weeks, our prayer for you comes from the priestly blessing used for generations:

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26 ESV

A word about fasting

During these 40 days, we encourage biblical fasting to draw closer to God and to eliminate many if not most of the distractions we often face. Fasting hits the reset button of our soul and renews us from the inside out, helping us rely more on God and prepare our hearts for all the good things He desires to bring into our lives.

Don't feel pressure to do what others are doing – your fast is solely between you and the Lord. It should present a challenge, but it's also very important to know your body, your options, and, most importantly, to follow the Holy Spirit's leading. Whether you do it for all or part of the 40 days, here are some options to fast:

Complete Fast

In this fast, you drink only liquids, typically water and/or light juices. Always seek the approval of your doctor/health care team before beginning a fast that involves your diet and nutrition.

Selective Fast

This fast involves removing certain elements from your diet. One example is the Daniel Fast where you remove everything from your diet except vegetables and water. Other selective fasts remove sugar, dairy, and/or grains, with the goal to simplify/purify your diet and focus instead on your relationship with God.

Partial Fast

This fast is sometimes called the Jewish Fast and involves foregoing certain meals during specific hours (like 6:00 am to 3:00pm) or from sunup to sundown or eating only one meal per day.

Soul Fast

This fast is a great option if you don't have much experience fasting food, have health issues that prevent you from fasting food, or if you wish to refocus certain areas of your life that are out of balance. You may choose to stop using social media or watching television for the duration of the fast and then carefully bring that element back into your life in healthy doses at the conclusion of the fast.

40 Days of Prayer and Fasting—Devotional Readings from the Book of Nehemiah

Day 1 — Nehemiah’s Burden

Scripture: Nehemiah 1:1–4

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah’s journey begins with a deep, holy burden. News of Jerusalem’s broken walls and burned gates moves him to tears and fasting. His response teaches us that spiritual renewal often begins with God stirring our hearts toward what is broken. This burden is not a passing emotion but a divine invitation. God uses people who allow their hearts to be moved by what moves Him. Nehemiah didn’t rush into action—he first allowed himself to feel the weight of the problem and carried it into prayer.

Prayer:

Lord, give me a heart sensitive to Your concerns. Help me feel Your burden for my family, church, and community. Break my heart for what breaks Yours, and shape my prayers accordingly.

Reflection:

- What situation weighs heavily on your heart right now?
- How might God be speaking to you through that burden?

Day 2 — A God-Centered Prayer

Scripture: Nehemiah 1:5–6

Expanded Insight:

Before presenting his needs, Nehemiah begins with adoration. He calls on the “great and awesome God,” reminding himself of who God is. Worship reorients us—it puts our problems in perspective and lifts our gaze beyond the immediate crisis. True prayer begins with recognizing God’s character and power. Nehemiah’s reverence sets the tone for everything else he prays.

Prayer:

Father, You are great and awesome. I worship You for Your faithfulness and steadfast love. Let my prayers rise from a place of awe and confidence in who You are.

Reflection:

- Do your prayers begin with worship or worry?
- What attributes of God bring you the most comfort today?

Day 3 — Confession and Humility

Scripture: Nehemiah 1:6–7

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah doesn't distance himself from Israel's sins; instead, he identifies himself with them. Confession is a necessary step toward spiritual renewal. When we confess honestly, we allow God to cleanse and reposition us for restoration. Nehemiah models humility by acknowledging the collective and personal failures that led to the nation's brokenness.

Prayer:

Lord, I confess my sins before You. Forgive me for the ways I've fallen short in thought, action, and attitude. Cleanse my heart and create in me a spirit of repentance.

Reflection:

- Is there an area of sin God is prompting you to confess?
- How does confession open the way for God to rebuild?

Day 4 — Remembering God's Promises

Scripture: Nehemiah 1:8–10

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah anchors his prayer in God's promises. He recalls God's covenant faithfulness even in times of discipline. When we bring God's Word into our prayers, we align ourselves with His heart and purposes. Nehemiah's confidence grows not from the circumstances but from God's unchanging character.

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for Your promises that never fail. Help me speak Your Word over my situations and trust in Your faithfulness.

Reflection:

- Which promise from Scripture strengthens you today?
- How can you incorporate God's promises into your daily prayers?

Day 5 — Availability to Serve

Scripture: Nehemiah 1:11

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah ends his prayer by offering himself as part of the solution. Prayer not only changes circumstances—it changes us. Nehemiah was willing to be used, even though it required courage and sacrifice. Sometimes the answer to our prayer begins with our availability.

Prayer:

Father, here I am. Use me according to Your will. Make me a vessel for Your purposes and give me the courage to act when You call.

Reflection:

- What might God be calling you to do in response to your prayers?
- Are you willing to be part of the solution?

Day 6 — Courage in the Presence of Authority

Scripture: Nehemiah 2:1–3

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah approaches the king with visible sorrow—a dangerous act in that era. Yet his courage grows from months of prayer. True courage doesn't come from self-confidence but from confidence in God. Nehemiah takes a risk because he trusts God's timing and presence.

Prayer:

Lord, help me take courageous steps when You open doors. Replace my fear with faith and guide my words when I speak.

Reflection:

- Where do you need courage today?
- What risk might God be calling you to take?

Day 7 — God's Favor

Scripture: Nehemiah 2:4–6

Expanded Insight:

When the king asks what Nehemiah wants, Nehemiah prays silently. This moment reveals a lifestyle of continual, quiet prayer. God grants him favor with the king, demonstrating that divine favor often follows faithful prayer. Nehemiah steps forward, trusting that God has prepared the way.

Prayer:

God, grant me Your favor in my decisions and relationships. Help me stay connected to You through continual prayer.

Reflection:

- How can you cultivate quick, silent prayers throughout your day?
- Where do you need God's favor right now?

Day 8 — Provision for the Mission

Scripture: Nehemiah 2:7–9

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah boldly requests letters, protection, and materials. His confidence reflects faith in God's provision. When God sends us, He supplies everything needed—resources, people, opportunities, and strength. Nehemiah steps forward with boldness, trusting that God equips those He calls.

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for being my Provider. Supply every need according to Your purposes and help me trust You completely.

Reflection:

- What resources do you need for what God is calling you to do?
- How can you trust God more boldly for provision?

Day 9 — Facing Opposition Early

Scripture: Nehemiah 2:10

Expanded Insight:

Before Nehemiah even begins, opposition appears. Sanballat and Tobiah are disturbed that someone seeks the welfare of God's people. This reminds us that spiritual progress often provokes resistance. But opposition is not a sign to stop—it's a sign to press deeper into prayer.

Prayer:

Lord, when I face opposition, help me stand firm. Strengthen my heart and remind me that You go before me.

Reflection:

- What opposition have you recently encountered?
- How can you anchor yourself in God when resistance comes?

Day 10 — Prayerful Assessment

Scripture: Nehemiah 2:11–15

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah quietly surveys the ruins at night. He doesn't rush into a public announcement. Instead, he takes time to evaluate the situation prayerfully and strategically. Sometimes God calls us to slow down, observe, and listen before acting.

Prayer:

God, give me wisdom to see things as they are and to discern the steps You want me to take. Guide my decisions and my timing.

Reflection:

- Where do you need clarity before acting?
- What situation requires a prayerful assessment?

Day 11 — Inviting Others into the Vision

Scripture: Nehemiah 2:17–18

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah shares the vision only after prayer and preparation. His words inspire the people to rise and build because the hand of God is clearly upon him. Vision is contagious when it is God-given. Community plays a vital role in accomplishing God's purposes.

Prayer:

Lord, give me the wisdom to share Your vision with others at the right time. Unite us in Your work and strengthen our collective purpose.

Reflection:

- Who might God be calling you to partner with?
- How can you encourage others to join in God's work?

Day 12 — Standing Firm Against Mockery

Scripture: Nehemiah 2:19–20

Expanded Insight:

When Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem mock Nehemiah, he responds with spiritual confidence rather than debate. He knows the work belongs to God, not to human approval. Mockery often attempts to weaken resolve, but Nehemiah shows us that identity in God steadies the soul.

Prayer:

Lord, guard my heart from discouragement when others misunderstand or ridicule what You've called me to do. Strengthen my resolve.

Reflection:

- Where does mockery or doubt try to derail you?
- How can you anchor your identity more firmly in God?

Day 13 — Everyone Has a Role

Scripture: Nehemiah 3

Expanded Insight:

This chapter highlights individuals, families, and groups working side by side to rebuild. Their unity shows that God's work advances when everyone contributes—no role is insignificant. Kingdom building requires willing hands and humble hearts.

Prayer:

Father, show me my role in Your work. Give me a willing heart to serve faithfully, no matter the task.

Reflection:

- What gifts has God given you to contribute?
- How can you serve more intentionally?

Day 14 — Dealing with Anger from Opponents

Scripture: Nehemiah 4:1–3

Expanded Insight:

Opposition escalates as the work progresses. Anger and ridicule from others can be intimidating, but Nehemiah refuses to let external aggression weaken his resolve. Spiritual battles often intensify when God's work advances.

Prayer:

Lord, protect my heart from intimidation. Help me stand strong in the face of anger, hostility, or criticism.

Reflection:

- How do you respond when others try to discourage you?
- What truth can you cling to during criticism?

Day 15 — Praying Before Acting

Scripture: Nehemiah 4:4–5

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah responds to taunts with prayer instead of retaliation. He shows us that prayer is not a last resort but a first response. By giving the situation to God, he keeps his heart free from bitterness.

Prayer:

Father, teach me to respond to challenges with prayer first. Guard my heart from reacting in anger or fear.

Reflection:

- What situations require a prayer-first response?
- How can prayer shift your emotional posture?

Day 16 — Progress Despite Pressure

Scripture: Nehemiah 4:6

Expanded Insight:

The people make remarkable progress because they work “with all their heart.” Wholehearted devotion keeps momentum alive even under pressure. Their unity and determination reveal the power of shared purpose.

Prayer:

Lord, fill my heart with passion and perseverance for the work You’ve given me. Help me give my best.

Reflection:

- What does wholehearted effort look like in your life?
- What divides your focus or passion?

Day 17 — Recognizing Schemes of Discouragement

Scripture: Nehemiah 4:7–8

Expanded Insight:

As progress grows, so does the enemy’s determination. Discouragement is often a tactic used to stop forward movement. When the enemy intensifies his attacks, it’s usually because breakthrough is near.

Prayer:

God, help me discern the schemes of discouragement and stand strong against them.

Reflection:

- Where is discouragement strongest right now?
- What progress might the enemy be trying to stop?

Day 18 — Prayer + Practical Readiness

Scripture: Nehemiah 4:9

Expanded Insight:

The people pray and set guards. Prayer and practical action are not enemies—they work together. God invites us to trust Him fully while also walking wisely.

Prayer:

Lord, give me the wisdom to pray boldly and act wisely. Help me honor You with both faith and preparation.

Reflection:

- Where do you need balance between prayer and action?
- What practical step is God prompting you to take?

Day 19 — Encouraging the Weary

Scripture: Nehemiah 4:10

Expanded Insight:

The people grow tired, overwhelmed by “too much rubble.” Weariness clouds perspective and weakens resolve. Nehemiah recognizes that encouragement is essential to keep hearts strong.

Prayer:

God, strengthen me when I grow weary. Restore my perspective and renew my spirit.

Reflection:

- Where do you feel overwhelmed?
- How can you encourage someone else who is weary?

Day 20 — Standing Guard

Scripture: Nehemiah 4:13–14

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah positions families at vulnerable places on the wall. He reminds them to “remember the Lord,” shifting their focus from fear to faith. Courage grows when we remember Who fights for us.

Prayer:

Lord, help me remember Your power and protection. Strengthen my heart to stand guard over my faith and family.

Reflection:

- What areas of your life need guarding?
- How can remembering God strengthen your courage?

Day 21 — Staying Ready

Scripture: Nehemiah 4:16–23

Expanded Insight:

The builders work with tools in one hand and weapons in the other. This picture reflects spiritual readiness—working diligently while staying alert to spiritual attack.

Prayer:

Father, help me stay spiritually alert. Equip me with discernment and perseverance in every season.

Reflection:

- What helps you stay spiritually attentive?
- Where do you need stronger vigilance?

Day 22 — Confronting Injustice Among God’s People

Scripture: Nehemiah 5:1–5

Expanded Insight:

Injustice arises within the community. Nehemiah recognizes that internal issues can be just as damaging as external enemies. Addressing injustice is part of faithful leadership.

Prayer:

Lord, give me a heart that values justice and compassion. Help me respond to wrongs with courage and wisdom.

Reflection:

- Where is God calling you to stand for justice?
- How can you show compassion to those suffering?

Day 23 — Godly Confrontation

Scripture: Nehemiah 5:6–13

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah confronts the nobles with righteous anger. His purpose is restoration, not humiliation. Godly confrontation aims to heal, correct, and rebuild.

Prayer:

Father, give me courage to confront what is wrong and wisdom to do it in love.

Reflection:

- Is there an issue God is prompting you to address?
- What would godly, gentle confrontation look like?

Day 24 — Living as an Example

Scripture: Nehemiah 5:14–19

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah refuses privileges that come with his position. His sacrificial leadership sets a standard for integrity. True leaders model what they expect from others.

Prayer:

Lord, help me lead with integrity, humility, and sacrifice. Let my life reflect Your heart.

Reflection:

- Where can you lead by example?
- How is God shaping your character as a leader?

Day 25 — Distraction Tactics

Scripture: Nehemiah 6:1–4

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah discerns that repeated invitations to meet are meant to distract and harm him. Not every invitation or opportunity is from God. Discernment protects us from subtle traps.

Prayer:

God, help me recognize and resist distractions that pull me away from Your purposes.

Reflection:

- What distractions keep you from God's calling?
- How can you stay focused?

Day 26 — False Accusations

Scripture: Nehemiah 6:5–9

Expanded Insight:

Lies and accusations attempt to intimidate Nehemiah. He responds with prayer and continues the work. When our hearts are anchored in God, lies cannot derail us.

Prayer:

Lord, protect me from false accusations. Strengthen my hands to continue the work You've given me.

Reflection:

- Where do lies or misunderstandings cause you fear?
- How can you stay rooted in God's truth?

Day 27 — Strengthen My Hands

Scripture: Nehemiah 6:9

Expanded Insight:

Sometimes all we can pray is a short, powerful prayer. “Strengthen my hands” is Nehemiah’s request for endurance. God delights in giving strength when we ask.

Prayer:

God, strengthen my hands today. Give me the endurance to finish what You’ve called me to do.

Reflection:

- Where do you need God’s strengthening power?

Day 28 — Discernment in Spiritual Manipulation

Scripture: Nehemiah 6:10–14

Expanded Insight:

Shemaiah pretends to speak for God, trying to lure Nehemiah into fear. Not every voice claiming spiritual authority is trustworthy. Nehemiah recognizes the deception because he knows God’s character and calling. Discernment grows when we remain grounded in truth.

Prayer:

Lord, sharpen my discernment. Help me recognize voices or influences that do not come from You.

Reflection:

- Whose voices influence your decisions?
- How can you stay rooted in God’s truth?

Day 29 — Finishing the Work

Scripture: Nehemiah 6:15–16

Expanded Insight:

The wall is completed in just 52 days—a miracle that even the enemies must acknowledge as God’s work. Finishing what we start brings glory to God. Perseverance is often the bridge between calling and completion.

Prayer:

Father, help me finish the assignments You have given me. Let my life testify to Your faithfulness.

Reflection:

- What work has God called you to finish?
- What step can you take today toward completion?

Day 30 — Community Accountability

Scripture: Nehemiah 7:1–3

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah appoints faithful, trustworthy leaders to guard the city. Accountability and structure help protect what God has restored. We need community and wise oversight to stay strong.

Prayer:

Lord, surround me with trustworthy people. Help me build habits and boundaries that protect my spiritual life.

Reflection:

- Who holds you spiritually accountable?
- What boundaries do you need to strengthen?

Day 31 — Returning to the Book

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:1–3

Expanded Insight:

The people gather eagerly to hear God's Word. Revival begins when hearts return to Scripture with hunger and humility. The Word brings direction, identity, and renewal.

Prayer:

God, give me a fresh hunger for Your Word. Open my heart to understand and obey Your truth.

Reflection:

- How can you prioritize Scripture more intentionally?
- What passage has spoken to you recently?

Day 32 — Understanding Brings Joy

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:7–12

Expanded Insight:

As the Levites help the people understand the Word, sorrow turns into joy. Godly understanding brings clarity, freedom, and celebration. Joy is rooted not in circumstances but in truth.

Prayer:

Lord, help me understand Your Word deeply. Let Your truth fill me with strength and joy.

Reflection:

- Where do you need deeper understanding from God?
- What truths bring joy to your heart today?

Day 33 — A Renewed Commitment

Scripture: Nehemiah 9

Expanded Insight:

After hearing Scripture, the people confess their sins and remember God's faithfulness throughout history. Reflection leads to repentance, and repentance leads to renewal. They recommit themselves to God's covenant.

Prayer:

Father, renew my heart. Lead me in repentance and restore a right spirit within me.

Reflection:

- What areas is God calling you to surrender?
- How has God shown faithfulness in your life?

Day 34 — Signing the Covenant

Scripture: Nehemiah 10:28–29

Expanded Insight:

The leaders, priests, and people make a written covenant to obey God. Commitment to God is intentional and communal. Spiritual renewal invites a fresh dedication of heart and lifestyle.

Prayer:

Lord, strengthen my commitment to Your ways. Help me walk faithfully and intentionally each day.

Reflection:

- What commitment is God asking you to renew?
- What practical steps can help you stay faithful?

Day 35 — Stewardship and Worship

Scripture: Nehemiah 10:32–39

Expanded Insight:

The people pledge to honor God with their firstfruits, offerings, and resources. Worship isn't just songs or rituals—it's giving God our best. Stewardship reflects our devotion.

Prayer:

God, cultivate generosity in my heart. Help me honor You with my time, talents, and resources.

Reflection:

- What area of stewardship needs growth?
- How can generosity become an act of worship in your life?

Day 36 — Repopulating the City

Scripture: Nehemiah 11

Expanded Insight:

Many people willingly relocate to Jerusalem to strengthen the community. Obedience sometimes means stepping into new, uncomfortable places. God calls us to go where we are needed.

Prayer:

Lord, make me willing to follow wherever You lead. Prepare my heart for new assignments.

Reflection:

- Where is God prompting you to “move” spiritually or practically?
- What fears do you need to release?

Day 37 — Dedication and Celebration

Scripture: Nehemiah 12:27–43

Expanded Insight:

The dedication of the wall is filled with joy, music, and thanksgiving. Celebration is an important spiritual practice—it reminds us of God’s goodness and acknowledges His victory.

Prayer:

Father, give me a spirit of gratitude and joy. Help me celebrate the victories You’ve brought into my life.

Reflection:

- What has God done that deserves celebration?
- How can gratitude shape your daily outlook?

Day 38 — Establishing Order

Scripture: Nehemiah 12:44–47

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah organizes responsibilities for worship, offerings, and daily service. Order supports spiritual growth. Discipline and structure help sustain renewal.

Prayer:

Lord, bring order to my spiritual life. Help me build rhythms that support worship and faithfulness.

Reflection:

- What areas of life need more spiritual order?
- What daily habits help you grow in faith?

Day 39 — Protecting the Sanctuary

Scripture: Nehemiah 13:4–14

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah discovers corruption in the temple and takes decisive action. Compromise enters gradually but harms deeply. Protecting sacred spaces—our hearts, homes, and worship—is essential.

Prayer:

God, help me guard my heart from compromise. Reveal anything that does not belong, and give me courage to remove it.

Reflection:

- What compromises threaten your spiritual strength?
- What “Tobiah” needs to be removed?

Day 40 — Remember Me, O My God

Scripture: Nehemiah 13:30–31

Expanded Insight:

Nehemiah ends his story with a simple prayer: “Remember me.” He has lived faithfully, served courageously, and finished his assignment. This prayer reflects a heart seeking God’s approval above all else.

Prayer:

Lord, as I conclude these 40 days, seal the work You’ve done in my heart. Help me live faithfully and finish well.

Reflection:

- What has God rebuilt in you during these 40 days?
- How will you carry this renewal into the future?