

## **Sermons 2007**

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# Chapter 1. Changing of the Guard

READ - *Nehemiah 4:1-9*

TEXT - *So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work. (Neh. 4:6)*

THEME - Success requires teamwork. Let's get in the game!

## Introduction

We come to the topic of our annual election of officers - an important annual milestone in the life of our church.

1. It is a time of opportunity for all of us who want to serve God.
2. It is a time of transition.
3. It is a time of renewing our commitment to press forward as a church - reaching our world, our communities, and our families and friends for Christ.

It is a time of the changing of the guard.

ILLUS - Buckingham Palace when we were in England.

It is a time for sending in replacement players.

ILLUS - Mt. Union football, waiting for them to send in Josh!

It is a time for passing the baton.

ILLUS - Relay race where I fell trying to make the pass.

Let's learn some truths from Nehemiah's story this morning, and apply them to our current situation here at RCC.

- Nehemiah had a big job to do.
- RCC has a big job to do.
- Nehemiah had a plan... method... mechanism for accomplishing his big job.
- RCC has a structure... method... mechanism for accomplishing our big job.

## Nehemiah's Method

1. 42 teams

(Men, women, clergy, laity - all kinds)

cf. *Nehemiah 3:1,12,28*

2. All working at the same time - together - side by side.

(Of course, not all worked as hard - some didn't "put their neck into it!")

cf. *Nehemiah 3:5,20*

3. All were concentrating on their neighborhoods

cf. *Nehemiah 3:10,23,28,30*

## How can we apply this to RCC?

1. All (everybody... YOU) are supposed to be involved in the work of God.  
cf. *Ephesians 4:11-13* ("to prepare God's people for works of service" (NIV))  
RCC has a mechanism that provides opportunity for ALL to serve in a capacity they feel comfortable with.
2. There will be always some who work harder than others.  
i.e. some will put their neck into it, and some won't always do that. (God, please don't let me be a Tekoite!  
RCC has been blessed with a core group who have WORKED HARD. No Tekoites among 'em!  
THANK GOD FOR THEM. GREAT IS THEIR REWARD. MAY THEIR TRIBE INCREASE, and MAY GOD ENLARGE THEIR COAST!  
They have fought a good fight, they have HELD THE LINE, they have RUN THEIR LEG OF THE RELAY.  
I suggest this morning that they have held this church in trust for those of us who come after them - the REPLACEMENT PLAYERS - the CHANGING OF THE GUARD.  
And now we need to get in the game.  
Consider for a moment the current situation:  
Our chairman of the board has held that position since the flood. Is there someone who will give her a rest?  
We have one family (S and M) who are like one armed paper hangers. They mow, clean, cook, prepare, serve, and do nearly everything here. They are treasurer, deacon, elder, all rolled into one. Is there someone who will ease their load?  
Elders - women who have taken that task because we men were unwilling. Blessed be they for their willingness to serve, and their willingness to defer to a qualified man who will step up. Are there no men who will help us be Biblical in this matter?  
Our current officers and committees are peopled with such as these:
  - a. Bob - nursing home, cancer, chemo, radiation
  - b. Ann - 94 years old! Housebound!
  - c. Bill - wheelchair bound! (BUT GREAT NEWS ABOUT HIM, BTW)How long do we expect them to hold the line? When do we send in the replacements?
3. TEAMWORK is the key to victory.
  - In the practical realm!  
ILLUS - Football, baseball, track, ALL SPORTS  
ILLUS - Worship programs, choirs, orchestras, sound teams, etc.
  - In the spiritual realm - teamwork is how we win the lost.  
ILLUS - Jesus sent the 70 out 2 by 2.  
*Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. (Ecclesiastes 4:9)*
  - In the spiritual realm - teamwork is our METHOD OF MINISTRY  
ILLUS - Feeding of the 5000 - *And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven,*

*he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. (Matt. 14:19)*

- In the spiritual realm - teamwork is our method of BUILDING EACH OTHER UP - HELPING EACH OTHER.

*But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. (1 Corinthians 12:7)*

*How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. (1 Cor. 14:26)*

*Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. (Ephesians 4:16 NLT)*

IN OTHER WORDS - The body grows and stays healthy when everybody does his / her part.

#### 4. Put simply - WE NEED EACH OTHER.

ILLUS - "There's a wonderful story about Jimmy Durante, one of the great entertainers of a generation ago. He was asked to be a part of a show for World War II veterans. He told them his schedule was very busy and he could afford only a few minutes, but if they wouldn't mind his doing one short monologue and immediately leaving for his next appointment, he would come. Of course, the show's director agreed happily. But when Jimmy got on stage, something interesting happened. He went through the short monologue and then stayed. The applause grew louder and louder and he kept staying. Pretty soon, he had been on fifteen, twenty, then thirty minutes. Finally he took a last bow and left the stage. Backstage someone stopped him and said, "I thought you had to go after a few minutes. What happened?" Jimmy answered, "I did have to go, but I can show you the reason I stayed. You can see for yourself if you'll look down on the front row." In the front row were two men, each of whom had lost an arm in the war. One had lost his right arm and the other had lost his left. Together, they were able to clap, and that's exactly what they were doing, loudly and cheerfully." Tim Hansel, Holy Sweat, 1987, Word Books Publisher, p. 104-105.

## Conclusion:

May I challenge you now? Will you be a part of the team?

1. Membership - if you've been on the fence about membership, will you join us? We need you - the work is big - the task is hard - God has gifted you - will you join us?  
Qualifications for membership at RCC are only 2 - saved, baptized after salvation.
2. Officers - will you pray about whether you are qualified and gifted to serve as an officer? Only members can serve as officers.
3. Committees - are you on the fence about the first two? You can serve on a committee without being a member - good chance to put your toe in the water - very low key way to serve God here. Will you pray about this?

Our church constitution explains in great detail the offices and committees - copies are available to anybody who wants one. See Vi or myself if you don't have one.

ILLUS - Chuck Swindoll mentions that geese are a great illustration of the teamwork we need: It's those stately geese I find especially impressive. Winging their way to a

## *Chapter 1. Changing of the Guard*

warmer climate, they often cover thousands of miles before reaching their destination. Have you ever studied why they fly as they do? It is fascinating to read what has been discovered about their flight pattern as well as their in-flight habits. Four come to mind.

1. Those in front rotate their leadership. When one lead goose gets tired, it changes places with one in the wing of the V-formation and another flies point.
2. By flying as they do, the members of the flock create an upward air current for one another. Each flap of the wings literally creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. One author states that by flying in a V-formation, the whole flock gets 71 percent greater flying range than if each goose flew on its own.
3. When one goose gets sick or wounded, two fall out of formation with it and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with the struggler until it's able to fly again.
4. The geese in the rear of the formation are the ones who do the honking. I suppose it's their way of announcing that they're following and that all is well. For sure, the repeated honks encourage those in front to stay at it.

As I think about all this, one lesson stands out above all others: it is the natural instinct of geese to work together. Whether it's rotating, flapping, helping, or simply honking, the flock is in it together...which enables them to accomplish what they set out to do. Chuck Swindoll, letter, October, 1991.