

FUTURE BUILDERS

Discussion Notes

SWORDS AND SHOVELS

This topic can bring up a lot of challenging issues for people in your Hub. Although these discussion notes are comprehensive you may want to spending less time on the questions in order to make sure you have plenty of time to pray for each other. This pray may look like encouraging one another to stand firm in the face of opposition, or it could be closer to pray ministry around the internal battles that we face.

Kate shared about the opposition that we face in day-to-day life. We can divide this into opposite we face from other people and opposition we can face from within ourselves. However, all of this is really spiritual attack. Read Ephesians 6:12 and reflect on it together. What stands out?

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

- Are you aware of opposition in your life? Is it something you think about?
- Have you considered that this opposition is actually spiritual opposition rather than just physical? Does that change the way you think about opposition in your life?
- Kate shared that spiritual opposition often comes when we are doing what God wants us to. Have you experienced this heightened attack when you are following God's will?

Opposition From Others: Anger, Mockery and Aggression

Kate shared 3 examples of attack from those that opposed Nehemiah in Nehemiah 4:1-3; anger, mockery and aggression.

- Go through each of these three examples, asking for each one whether anyone has experienced this kind of opposition.
- Is there one that you have faced more than other types?
- How can we make sure these types of opposition don't distract us or prevent us from doing what God wants us to?
- How can we make sure we keep loving the people who oppose us? How do we protect ourselves whilst also loving our enemies?

Opposition from Within: Discouragement, Fear and Negativity

The Israelites also suffered opposition from within. The same can be true from us, our own thought-life can bring opposition to the things that God wants for us.

- Are you aware of opposition from our own thought life? Are you aware of spiritual warfare in your thoughts?

We see in Nehemiah that the Israelites got tired and became discouraged half way through the rebuilding process, they suffered **discouragement**.

- What does discouragement look like in day-to-day life? How can we be discouraged in our faith?

- What makes us more susceptible to discouragement?

The Israelites were also faced opposition in the form of internal fear. Kate talked about how big a role fear can play in our lives.

- Where do you see fear playing a large role in our society?
- How can we help each other fight against internal fear?

Finally, Kate explained that the Israelites had to fight against negativity.

- How can we spot negativity in our inner life?
- What can we do as a Hub to encourage each other to avoid being overly negative whilst still being real and honest about our lives?

What do we do in the face of opposition?

Kate explained that the Israelites dealt with opposition by fighting battles and doing the practical work at the same time: "those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other," For us today, this looks like doing both the 'spiritual battles' of prayer, worship, scripture and holiness, whilst also doing the 'practical stuff' of Hubs, serving, social action and witness.

- How do we balance the sword and shovel?
- Is there one that we are better at?
- What are the challenges of trying to do both sword and shovel at the same time?