

Time to Build Again: An Introduction to the Book of Haggai

Life Group Discussion Guide

The immediate background to the book of Haggai is found in Ezra 1-6. Therefore this week's discussion guide is based on events which happen in these chapters which tell of the Jewish people returning to Jerusalem after a period of exile...

1. The first thing the exiles did when they arrived back in Jerusalem was clear away the rubble & rebuild the altar so they could start & get back into the routine of daily worship (Ezra 3:1-7). Throughout the book of Ezra we see this pattern continue (3:10-13; 6:16-22).
 - What does this teach us about their priorities at the time?
 - What is the value of routine in worship & what are the dangers?
 - What kind of rubble can get in the way of Christian worship?

2. After rebuilding the altar & laying the foundation of the temple opposition arose to the work of rebuilding the temple (Ezra 4). This discouraged the people & stopped the work for 16 years before Haggai came and awakened the people with God's words. During this period of 16 years the people's focus drifted from building God's house to building their own houses. This caused them to miss the solution to the lie's of their enemies which was in Babylonia all along. This becomes clear when the people begin working again (Ezra 5-6:12).
 - What does this teach us about the ways in which discouragement and difficulty can affect us as people?
 - How can we guard our hearts from becoming discouraged & negative?

3. Why is it so important we understand the story, people, time & circumstances Haggai was speaking into? Why is it equally important for us to understand the story & circumstances of the people we are called to reach & witness to before ministering God's Word to them?
Discuss.