

# Men With a Burden and a Concern

by Zac Poonen

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*Men who seek God's honor and the fulfillment of His will fast and pray to accomplish God's purposes.*

**Scripture:** Ezra 8:21, Nehemiah 1:4, Matthew 9:36

**Topics:** "Prayer", "Burden for God's Work"

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## Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of having a burden and concern for God's work, drawing parallels between the movements of Israel from Babylon to Jerusalem and the current state of the church. He highlights the examples of Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, who fasted and prayed for the advancement of God's kingdom, showing that true leaders are those who selflessly intercede for others rather than criticize. Poonen urges believers to pray for those who preach God's Word, recognizing that they are often targets of spiritual attacks. He calls for a return to genuine shepherding, where leaders are committed to the well-being of their flock and are driven by a deep concern for their spiritual health. The sermon concludes with a plea for more shepherds who are aligned with God's heart to rise up in the church.

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## Transcript

The whole movement of Israel FROM BABYLON TO JERUSALEM was born and carried forward by men who were selflessly concerned for the furtherance of God's work. For this they fasted and prayed. This is how it is going to be in the church in our day too. Those who seek the honour of God's Name, the coming of His kingdom and the fulfilment of His will on earth as it is in heaven, will fast and pray and bind the workings of evil spirits, and thus accomplish God's purposes.

Daniel was a man who frequently fasted and prayed. Ezra too was a man who knew how to fast and pray when leading a group of Israelites from Babylon to Jerusalem (Ezra 8:21).

Nehemiah wept and fasted and prayed when he heard that Jerusalem was broken down and its walls burnt with fire (Neh.1:4). He didn't criticise the Israelites in Jerusalem for being lazy or selfish. No. He fasted and prayed for them. He was so burdened that even his boss (the king) noticed his grief. Finally, Nehemiah gave up his position and his comfort in the palace in order to go and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Have we ever been grieved like Nehemiah, because the work of the Lord is not progressing? Have we ever fasted and prayed like he did, because we saw that things were not going well in the church? Do we ever pray for those who preach God's Word to us?

I wonder if we realise that those who serve God and preach His Word faithfully (and their families) are targets of Satan's wrath. They are high on Satan's hit-list. Let me recommend that you stop criticising them, for Satan can do that job quite well, without your help! Instead pray for them a little more in the coming days, that they will be preserved from the attacks of the enemy.

As in Israel 2000 years ago, so in India today, many of the Lord's sheep are scattered here and there, without shepherds to care for them. Many are the hirelings in our land who work for pay. Few are the shepherds who are willing to lay down their lives for the flock. No-one has the right to preach God's Word to God's flock if he has no burden for the sheep, and if he does not pray for them regularly.

Pray that the Lord of the harvest will thrust forth shepherds after His own heart into the harvest at this time (Matt.9:36-38; Jer.3:15).

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