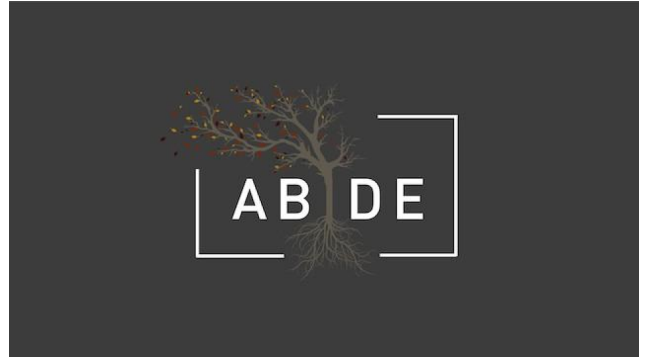


Royal Redeemer Going Deeper Guide

Based on the sermon for January 8, 2023:

Abide: Celebration



**For personal reflection or for use as a devotion with
CGS Community or family**

- **Begin by reflecting on/sharing a high and/or a low from your week**

- **CONNECT** *with each other*

- Do you find it easy to laugh at yourself?

- **GROW** *in Christ*

Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, “This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep.”

For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

10 Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

11 The Levites calmed all the people, saying, “Be still, for this is a holy day. Do not grieve.”

12 Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.

Nehemiah 8:9-12

- Share any words or phrases that speak into your life today.
- “*The Christian should be an alleluia from head to foot!*” - Augustine of Hippo. When is the last time you felt like “an alleluia from head to foot”? Was your celebration contagious?
- The Bible provides a potpourri of passages about celebration that help us see how celebration is at the heart of the way of Christ. What do you notice about these passages?
 - John the Baptist leaped for joy in Elizabeth’s womb upon hearing Mary’s voice (Luke 1:41).
 - Angels announced Jesus’ birth with shouts of joy (Luke 2:10).
 - Jesus began his public ministry with the promise of good news, freedom, and liberation (Luke 4:18, 19).
 - He stated that the purpose of his coming was to provide abundant life (John 10:10).
 - He endured the cross for the joy set before him (Hebrews 12:2).
 - Jesus left the world bequeathing his joy to the disciples: “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full” (John 15:11, NASB)
- Read John 2:1-10. Surely it was no accident that he chose a wedding feast as the occasion—after all, the church will come to be referred to as his bride, and he the groom. What else does Jesus’ first miracle help you to understand?
- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. Imagine that some close friends at RR have just received the

news that their eight-year-old daughter has been killed in an automobile accident. Should your attitude with them be, “Weep with those who weep”? Or should it be, “Rejoice in the Lord always: again I say, rejoice”?

- o Why do you think a wholesome evening of side-splitting laughter with friends does you so much good? When was one time you laughed really hard?
- o Why do you think human beings often find celebration so difficult? What stops you from celebrating?
- o What is one way you can add more celebration to your life next week? How about planning a family, non-holiday celebration this year?

- **SERVE** *others*

This month our second offering is going to be given to Pathway to Hope, a pregnancy care center in Hamilton, OH. To find out more information and make a donation, go to <https://www.royalredeemer.org/january-second-offering-pathway-to-hope/>

- **End with Prayer, the Lord's Prayer, or a short Blessing.**