

SCRIPTURE

Nehemiah 4:9-23; 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NLT)

But we prayed to our God and guarded the city day and night to protect ourselves. Then the people of Judah began to complain that the workers were becoming tired. There was so much rubble to be moved that we could never get it done by ourselves. Meanwhile our enemies were saying, “*Before they know what’s happening, we will swoop down on them and kill them and end their work.*”

The Jews who had lived near the enemy came and told us again and again, “*They will come from all directions and attack us!*” So I placed armed guards behind the lowest parts of the wall in the exposed areas. I stationed the people to stand guard by families, armed with swords, spears, and bows.

Then as I looked over the situation, I called together the leaders and the people and said to them, “*Don’t be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious, and fight for your friends, you families, and your homes!*”

Then our enemies heard that we knew of their plans and that God had frustrated them, we all returned to our work on the wall. But from then on, only half my men worked while the other half stood guard with spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. The officers stationed themselves behind the people of Judah who were building the wall. The common laborers carried on their work with one hand supporting their load and one hand holding a weapon. All the builders had a sword belted to their side. The trumpeter stayed with me to sound the alarm.

Then I explained to the nobles and officials and all the people, “*Thy work is very spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. When you hear the blast of the trumpet, rush to whatever it is sounding. Then our God will fight for us!*”

We worked early and late, from sunrise to sunset. And half the men were always on guard. I also told everyone living outside the walls to move into Jerusalem. That way they and their servants could go on guard duty at night as well as work during the day. During this time, none of us – not I, nor my relatives, nor my servants, nor the guards who were with me – ever took off our clothes. We carried our weapons with us at all times, even when we went for water.

“So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.”

The Word of God for the People of God
THANKS BE TO GOD