

# Where's Your Chair?

Nehemiah 5 9-13



They have given freely to the poor; their righteousness stands fast for ever;  
their head will be exalted with honour.

Psalm 112:9

## **Praising:**

God of the poor, friend of the weak,  
give us compassion we pray:  
melt our cold hearts,  
let tears fall like rain;  
come, change our love from a spark to a flame.

## **Reading:**

Nehemiah 5:9-13  
A decision is made

Nehemiah appeals to God and to the threat from those opposed to the rebuilding if the Jews persist in lending and taking interest from their own. He insists that as one Jewish family they stop their unjust behaviour and start doing the right thing. Nehemiah is not putting an end to the lending of money wholesale, but he is writing off the debts currently being carried by his building

crew. Nehemiah's fellow Jews see that this is the immediate course of action they should all take, priests included. As one gathered people they commit themselves spiritually to returning everyone's property and to forgoing the possibility of further claims in the future. Nehemiah shakes out the fold of his garment to symbolise God's judgment on anyone who reneges on their undertaking, and they commit their promise solemnly to the Lord.

## **Listening:**

## **Praying:**

We pray Lord for a sense of doing the right social thing

- of remembering those around us who are burdened or who feel trapped financially
- of being ready to settle for less ourselves to improve the lot of society as a whole
- of protecting the most vulnerable from those who seek to take advantage of them

Father: when you show me something wrong in my own behaviour or the structures and systems around me, give me the courage of Christ to name it and do something about it. Amen

## **Doing:**

Friday, 16 September 2016