

October 18, 2020

Food for Our Souls

Nehemiah 8:1-12

World Teachers' Day falls on October 5 every year. Usually, that means teacher appreciation gifts and handmade cards from students. This year, as with pretty much everything, it's different. This year, teachers are navigating a world of virtual learning, social distancing in the classroom, and rethinking the way they teach as the Coronavirus pandemic stretches on.

Students might not be meeting in person, but that doesn't make the work of teachers any less important. In fact, the argument can be made that the work of teachers is more important now than ever. "This year involves so much more than teaching, [Diane] Thompson [a high school teacher in Nashville, Tennessee] said. Her school is finding ways to give kids tech support and internet access, as well as food to make up for missing free and reduced lunches at school."¹ Teachers are taking educational information, technical information, and social services information, then communicating that to students and families.

The Focal Passage this week echoes how important teachers are: "They read aloud from the scroll, the Instruction from God, explaining and interpreting it so the people could understand what they heard" (Nehemiah 8:8). The work of teachers was important in the time of Ezra the scribe, and it's important today. The student book author writes, "Several assistants, similar to modern-day Sunday school teachers, helped the people to understand Ezra's preaching. Even in Ezra's day, people needed help reading, hearing, and understanding Scripture."²

Teachers of all stripes, from Sunday school volunteers to kindergarten teachers to college professors are learning new ways of helping us learn. They are navigating challenges they have never dealt with before to make sure we continue to grow and to gain understanding. If you are being taught by someone or know any teachers, thank them for their hard work. "God uses the preparation and wisdom of teachers in forming the community of faith."³

1. What are some creative ways teachers are using to help students learn in your community?
2. What do you think the hardest part of being a teacher is during the Coronavirus pandemic?
3. How can you help the teachers in your church (Sunday school teachers or your pastor) by volunteering your time or expertise?

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¹From cnn.com/2020/10/05/us/world-teachers-day-coronavirus-trnd/index.html.

²From *Adult Bible Studies*, Fall 2020, by Chuck Aaron (Cokesbury, 2020); page 69.

³From *Adult Bible Studies*; page 69.