



CRAIG REES • 21 MAY 2023

1. Have you ever attended Homecoming? If so, which of the following best express why you went and what you took away?
 - a. Nostalgia and connection.
 - b. Sense of belonging and identity.
 - c. Celebration of tradition and heritage.
 - d. Opportunity for reconnection and networking.

2. Which Biblical story do you think has the best Homecoming component and why? If you are struggling to think of one, think of Jesus's ascension, the lost stories of Luke 15, and the 'returns' of Ezra and Nehemiah.

3. Ezra 3:3 says that despite fear, the people built the altar and sacrificed. Have you recently had to do something you know others would not approve of? What motivated you to do that, and what kept you strong?

4. How does returning home connect us with the traditions and values that make us who we are? How would you respond to someone who says that returning home connects them with painful rather than joyful memories?

5. Ezra 3:4-6 shows that on the “first day,” the people worshipped. Worship and praise were a priority to them. Even though the situation was imperfect, the people wasted no time before worshipping God. How easy is it to look beyond the imperfect situation and worship? More practically, how easily can you push past what is negative in your world and count your blessings? Are you taking time to cultivate celebration, gratitude, and joy?

6. Ezra 3:7-13 addresses their commitment to preparing for the future. A frequent part of many Homecomings is the ask that alumni often receive. What goes through your mind when you attend something, and the ask is made? What motivates you to respond? Is it more the obligation to the past or a connection with the future? How truly vested are you in your school, or college, or university’s future?

7. Ezra 3:12-13 is a wonderful passage that shows how emotions are complex and how planning for the future is a mixed experience. One person’s joy is another person’s trouble. Can you think of a time when you shared plans for the future and got a mixed reaction? How did you handle that? What is the best way of handling mixed reactions?

8. How do you deal with mixed emotions? Ezra 10, the passage about inter-faith marriage, suggests that mixed emotions can lead to compromised behavior. What have you learned about working through your mixed emotions?