



Moving towards that spacious place...

¹⁶ He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. ¹⁷ He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. ¹⁸ They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support. ¹⁹ He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me. **Psalm 18:16-19**

We've been back from an excellent time in Norway (see accompanying letter) almost two months now and it has been quite the rollercoaster journey. The transition back into life in Southampton was not easy but we were soon on our way to the Lake District for a family holiday followed by our National student conference. Despite another excellent time away Debbie found herself feeling increasingly exhausted. While not unusual after a busy summer it was exasperated by Aaron being a bit of a pickle with his sleeping (or lack of!) and Debbie herself finding it hard to get off to sleep. Hence Debbie went back in to the Mother & Baby Unit at the beginning of September for support and after spending an increasing proportion of time at home was formally discharged earlier this week. It has been a particularly refreshing time for her and she is now "feeling better than she has felt for years". We had been asking God to bring her to a place she would be able to not merely "cope" but "thrive". This promise of a spacious place that Debbie has been holding on to and without wanting to jump the gun it seems that such a place is now in view. The struggle appears to be gone but there is some readjustment to make in the coming months. We are grateful for a lighter looking diary at the moment and intend to try and keep it that way this side of Christmas!

Last month we wrote *"It would be easy to become discouraged as we face more difficult times once more but we are given hope by the fact that God is still good, He is still in control and He is still with us every step of the way. It's been quite the journey that He has been leading us on these past 3.5 years! God never promises a struggle-free life but He does promise to be with us whatever life brings our way..."* Once again we are pleased to testify to the grace and faithfulness of the God who loves us and delights in us. We've see this in the way that He has upheld us during more challenges and also in His lavish provision for us. These past weeks we have not only seen a huge transformation in Debbie but also in our house as the new third floor has been taking shape (pictures overleaf). The work is not yet complete but the end is very much in sight!

We know that there will be more challenges down the road and no recovery is necessarily permanent but we have no reason to doubt that God will continue to be there with us.

Investing in the next generation...

New Students – Alongside the work on the house and supporting the family we have also been working with the student team to try and meet new students. So far we've had our first couple of introduction meetings and been encouraged by the students who have joined us. These early days are quite a challenge while the students decide their commitments. We are eager to invest in the next generation and so will continue to look for opportunities to meet new people over the coming months.

Term Programme – This term we are talking about the Mission of God's People in our big group times together (fortnightly). We are talking about what it means to live a missional life; last week we were thinking about how we get a vision for the people we are spending time with day by day. In the coming weeks we will talk about how we live lives that create curiosity and how we communicate in such a way to point people to the Saviour. Finally we will spend some time thinking about a vision for the world. When we do not have a big group meeting we continue to meet in small groups for Bible study and there are a couple of Sunday lunches and a weekend away planned too. We see all of these things as ways for people to engage with the group and ways for our team to engage with the students 'life on life'.

The Team – In the summer we said goodbye to Adam (now studying at All Nations in preparation for Latvia) but we also welcome Tom to the team. Our team is made up of three students (Sam, Emi and Geoff) and 6 Graduates (Sarah, Stephen, Anna, Tom, Jane & Pieter). Each of these amazing people who have all been involved with the ministry for some time help support Lydia and myself (Steve) in leading the work here in Southampton.

Please pray over the coming months:

- Give thanks for God's gracious healing hand in the way that He has brought Debbie through these difficult few weeks and kept His promise to bring her into that spacious place in His timing and on His terms.
- Now that Debbie is home, please ask God to sustain Debbie's recovery, help and protect her during these months of readjustment and give us wisdom so that we do not over-commit ourselves.
- Give thanks for the kids who have all started back at school this past month. Pray for them as we continue to adjust to the challenges of being a family of seven amidst all that goes on in our lives day by day.
- Ask God to continue to bring new students into the student ministry; people in whose lives He is already at work and in whom God wants us and our team to play a part in establishing, encouraging and equipping.
- As the work on our house draws to a close please join us in thanking God for His lavish provision for our growing family.

To God be the Glory,

Steve, Debs, Benjamin, Naomi, Samuel, Jacob & Aaron



Autumn – Key Dates

- Sat 22 Oct** – Southern NAVS Student Labourers Day
- Fri 28 Oct** – English Student Leaders Community (B'ham)
- Wed 2 Nov** – IMT Meeting in Southampton (Steve)
- Fri 25-Sun 27 Nov** – SOTON NAVS Weekend Away

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