

Steve & Debs serving with The Navigators in Southampton and beyond



Discipleship Week at Elvheim in Skjolden

"We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 1:3

At Discipleship week this summer our group was thinking about Faith in Action as we continued our series on Faith, Hope and Love based on the verse above. For the week in late July we were joined this year by students and recent graduates from USA, England, Scotland, Romania, Germany and Holland. This proved to be an excellent group and we learned together about how we can trust God in faith and how such faith is lived out in action. The thinking behind these Discipleship weeks has always been to combine teaching about God with our experience of life and this week was no different. While hiking in the valley on the first day the weather turned on us and sustained rain (despite none falling back in Skjolden) made a relatively straightforward hike quite challenging for the group. Some came off the mountain determined to never hike again while others rated this hike the best of the whole trip because it had stretched them! It was an opportunity to learn perseverance and think about how we respond to the unpredictability nature of life. The week also included opportunities to learn skills in baking bread, being around children, gutting fish, building fires and DIY work on Elvheim. We trust that some of these life lessons along with all we were learning about Faith provided a fun yet helpful opportunity for learning. One person wrote that the week taught them about *"being confident in themselves and in God"*. Others said they were learning about *"waiting and trusting God's timing"*, that *"doubting is an opportunity for growing faith"* and that *"faith keeps on believing"*. Several testified to the week encouraging them to invest more in their relationship with God. All in all we were very encouraged by all God was doing in us and through us during the week. It was also a blessing to partner with our team (Sam, Anna and Emi) and learn together about leading and helping others.



Investing in the next generation...



As you will know Discipleship Week was one element of a 3 week Discipleship Programme. The second week was an outreach week in Bergen and the final week the team joined Tim & Annie Forester's God-Seeking week back in Skjolden. The vision was to bring together elements of the programme which would encourage and stretch the team in different ways; namely time for input, output and debrief. Our friend Beth Peterson (3rd from right) co-lead this team experience as she also took leadership of the week in Bergen. Stephen (far left), Matt (far right) and Claire (right of Beth) were all undertaking cross-cultural experience as part of the Connect Programme while Tom and Hannah (both left of Beth) were students stepping out on an adventure of faith.

Reading their evaluation forms is very encouraging and it highlights the fact that the trip impacted each of them in very different ways. There is so much to be thankful for in all that God had been doing in their lives. There was also some great fruit from the time in Bergen in particular. The team spent their week engaging students (who were arriving for the start of the term) in conversation. One in particular who went on to spend quite a bit of time with the team said at the end of the week "thank you for waking me up spiritually". We are also encouraged that as a result of this time a small group of students was formed to work through the new 'Uncover John' material in Bergen. For us as a family it is such a privilege to be part of the ongoing stories of these amazing people. Norway is always such a highlight and although it involves a heavy workload (esp. in advance) it is so worth it. Some of our best ongoing relationships have come out of this trip and many existing relationships have been hugely blessed when we have been able to do life with them in Norway. Watch this space for details of next year's adventure.

Please pray over the coming months:

- Please continue to lift up the team and those who joined us for Discipleship Week asking God to cement the lessons He has been teaching them this summer.
- Please pray for the people the team met in Bergen and that this fruit would be 'fruit that lasts'. Pray for a good ongoing relationship with the Navigators in Bergen.
- Pray finally for decisions about next summer, esp. in the areas of scheduling, make up of programme and leadership.

To God be the Glory,

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



Our Address: 53 Harefield Road, Southampton, UK, SO17 3TG

Home Tel: 02380-677557, Steve Mobile: 07852-233960, Debs Mobile: 07767-145012

Email: steveanddebs@the-mcclures.co.uk, Skype: steve.debs.mcclure, Twitter: mcclure1978 / mcclure1980

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