



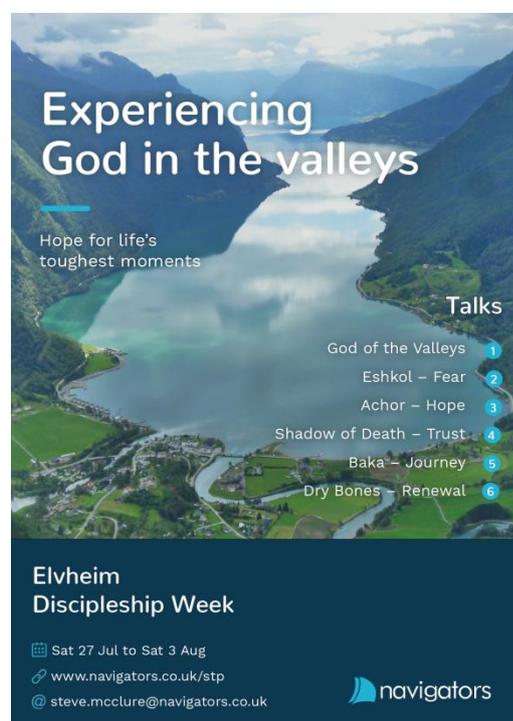
Crew from Elvheim
Discipleship Week 2018

Hope for Life's toughest moments.....Summer #15

"For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land – a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the valleys and hills; a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig-trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills." Deut 8:7-9 (NIV)

This summer will be our 15th in Skjolden, Norway. It's been a place where we have been so thrilled to be a part of all that God has been doing in the lives of all those that God has continued to bring year on year. Five years ago we tackled the theme of Experiencing God in the mountains and this summer brings the sequel as we now look to the valleys. If you have followed Steve's blog at all over the past year you cannot fail to have seen his series on Valley experiences and what a journey it has been. We have entitled the programme *Hope for Life's Toughest Moments* because time spent in the valleys often proves to be a difficult time in the Bible. Our vision for the Discipleship programme at Elvheim is to see participants grapple with some of the realities of life. There are five words used in the Old Testament that are translated 'valley' and they depict five very different kinds of places. Some are broad plains or lowlands while others describe narrower and/or steep-sided valleys, like gorges. This should be no surprise because the times we spend in the valleys of life will also look very different! In the Bible the valley is depicted as a place of growth and abundance (see verses above), but it is also often a place of battle and hardship too. Even in the darkest of places we find that valleys are often a source of hope, refreshment and encouragement.

As people step out of their natural spheres of influence to attend it is a great chance for them to be encouraged by being together in community and an opportunity to explore God's perspective on the challenges that life brings. As you will see from the flier the Norwegian landscape lends itself well to this topic and we are excited about how the combination of sessions and scenery will work together in tandem. Each of the sessions will focus on a particular Bible valley; bringing out a really interesting set of topics (fear, hope, trust, journeying &



Experiencing God in the valleys

Hope for life's toughest moments

Talks

- God of the Valleys 1
- Eshkol – Fear 2
- Achor – Hope 3
- Shadow of Death – Trust 4
- Baka – Journey 5
- Dry Bones – Renewal 6

Elvheim Discipleship Week

Sat 27 Jul to Sat 3 Aug

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renewal) that will help us grow in hope to prepare us for the toughest moments of life. Please pray for our time this summer and for the group of around 30 (including 10 children) who God is drawing together for Discipleship Week. We are also grateful to have some great people to help us including Jonathan, India, Gez and Beth, amongst others. Please see the accompanying letter about how you can partner with us again in this endeavour both in prayer, and with practicalities. If you are able to help us on our way we would be very glad to hear from you.

Semester 2 Update

This semester has been really encouraging as we have been on a journey through the subject of Grace with the students. For many our minds and hearts have been enlarged as we have sought to get our heads around just how amazing God's grace really is: in terms of our salvation (God's divine favour) and also in terms of the sufficiency of His grace in everyday life (God's divine assistance). Please pray that the lessons learned would have been taken to heart, and that they would help each one of us become lifelong followers of Jesus.

As ever the ministry participated in the national BIG Weekend (on the subject of creativity) in Blackpool, and then we had the opportunity to run and host an Emerging Leaders' Day for 18-30s in March (see photo alongside). This was a great opportunity to be equipped in knowing God (UP), serving in His body (IN) and reaching out to our friends (OUT). The feedback was very positive and we enjoyed great weather in the New Forest also. We had people with us from across England and are now working on an Emerging Leaders' Weekend in November.



We continue to count it a huge privilege and blessing to be involved in the lives of others. We love working with the student ministry team and partnering together with them in the lives of those involved in the ministry. This summer we say goodbye to Jane Mitchell who is one of longest serving team members. Jane has faithfully been involved in the student ministry and many of our summer teams since 2003. She will be sorely missed in the years to come. We also say goodbye this summer to some of our Malaysian students who are finishing their courses. The next academic year is the final year for some of our student leaders (Ian, Izzy and Tess) who all graduate in July 2020. What a blessing they have been: please pray for God to lead each of them to what He has next for them.

Finally Steve has also been heavily involved with Formation School this year at Above Bar Church. Steve has been leading a [Huddle' (small group) and has also had the opportunity of doing a little teaching. Over the past few weeks we have been grieving the loss of our friend, colleague and mentor Thompy Wright who was a founder and co-director of Formation School. We recently attended the fantastic thanksgiving service for his life and Steve has also written a tribute on Thompy's impact on his own life which you can find at www.the-mcclures.co.uk. Please do pray for the ongoing work of Formation School (which aims to grow disciple-making leaders) and if you are local and God leads you, then do apply. Applications are open for next year: www.formationschool.org.

Thanks and Prayer

As we look forward to these next few months please do pray for us as we prepare for our trip to Norway (24th July to 10th August). Running a conference and leading a planning team is not easy, particularly when the conference happens in another country! Please pray for safe travel, spiritual protection, good weather, a great bunch of people and a really special time to be had by all. Pray too for God's leading for those who will be playing roles during the week, leaders, speakers, worship leaders and those involved in the practicalities.

Pray too for the family as we finish another year. The big transitions (Ben to secondary school and Aaron to Reception) are still a year off (Sept 2020) but family life is ever-changing. Please pray for the grace to deal with all that life brings our way: both the challenges and all of the opportunities it offers.

To God be the Glory,

Steve, Debs, Ben, Naomi, Sam, Jacob & Aaron

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