



The Family on a very wet holiday in the Lakes (October 2021)

Equipped for works of service...

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” **Ephesians 4:11-13**

Paul often writes about his vision for ministry and the above verses are particularly helpful in summarising and articulating that vision. He differentiates between the roles of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers – all of whom he says have been given to the church in order that God’s people be equipped for *works of service*. Paul says that their responsibility is to prepare and equip others for those works of service rather than to do those works of service themselves. This is the essence of a disciple-making ministry that seeks to grow *disciples who make disciples*. It is about passing on all that God has been teaching as well as imparting a vision and the tools for helping others. This is how Jesus worked with His disciples so that the Kingdom of God grew exponentially through their endeavours. The disciples copied Jesus’ example, and in a short amount of time, through the power of the Holy Spirit, they turned the world upside down.

Paul is also clear on purpose, and says that all of this is so that the Body of Christ would be built up towards *unity in the faith* and *maturity in Christ*. This vision is about God’s people getting to know Jesus better and deepening their convictions in Him. On the basis of these foundations, it is a vision about us maturing our character; growing in competence; and making our unique contribution towards the Kingdom of God. For over two decades this has been the heart-beat of our ministry also: the vision to equip others and help them move towards maturity in Christ our Saviour. Paul wants our ministry to flow from such a vision as this.

We also see this as relevant for our family especially as they seem to be growing up ever faster! Ben is now 13 (a teenager) and is enjoying his time at Secondary school alongside football training/matches most days. A friend recently commented that it is astonishing what he can do with a football! Naomi (11) will join Ben at Secondary school in September, and is enjoying more freedom to go out with her friends. Sam (9) is also heavily into his football, alongside his music. Jacob (7) has a remarkable ability to remember things, and will regularly astound us with just how much knowledge he has amassed. Finally, Aaron (5) is still into everything, and always wants to be involved in what his siblings are doing! He is doing well at school and is easily the most helpful of all the kids with jobs around the house. Our desire for them all is that they too would grow towards unity and maturity in the faith, and that in time they would also give themselves to the works of service that God has for them. What a privilege it is to walk with (even when it doesn’t always feel like that) and watch these five young people growing up:)

Ministry Update

We continue to work on helping people in their 20s to 40s through our **Building to Last** ministry. The online meetings have been well attended and we're beginning to try and gather people locally as well. We've also seen how a smaller group can provide better opportunities with specific people. We've continued looking at some Inspiring Lives through the life of Paul and have now covered Ananias, Barnabas, Timothy, Titus, Silas and Lydia. It's been pretty exciting seeing different aspects of this disciple-making vision worked out through their lives ([Recordings available](#)). However, we've also found that people in this phase are particularly busy, so attendance is inconsistent. On Saturday 23rd April, we are putting on a Day Conference called Refuel (navigators.co.uk/refuel) which we are very excited about. Our good friend Bettina has agreed to be the key-note speaker for this day, and there will be a choice of six engaging seminars to choose from. Our aim is for this to be a place for people to come and be refuelled amidst the challenges of life. All in their 20s to 40s are most welcome!



Formation School: What a great year we have had with 15 eager students eating up whatever we throw at them. It is so thrilling to see them learning and growing in their vision to make disciples who make disciples. Four of the students are from other churches, and we have a range of generations represented across the group, making for a rich and diverse learning experience. This role has been a great fit for Steve, who is thriving on the responsibility to lead and develop the school. We are also excited to run an online gathering for Alumni on

Thursday 24th March entitled *Responding to God in times of Crisis*. However, despite all these encouragements, the future of the school is currently in question due to major staffing changes at Above Bar Church. We continue to argue that disciple-making should be at the heart of the churches vision going forward. Watch this space!

Our Wider Contribution: Debbie has not worked as an Occupational therapist for some time now due to the pressure and stress of working in the health service. This has freed her up for a range of other opportunities including the Nav-Mums network which continues to meet once a month. Debbie has also been leading an additional mid-month Bible study for those wanting additional support. She is also enjoying meeting with various ladies in their 20s to 40s, and helping to cover shortages in the children's work at Church. Steve continues to be a part of the England & Wales Leadership team (since Sept 2021), as well as continuing his role with the International Missions Team (since Sept 2016). Both have been quite stimulating this year as the Navigators work through a raft of developments following on from the change of Country Leader last year.

To Hold up in Prayer...

- Pray for our family as we study, work and serve together here in Southampton. Ask God to make our family a blessing to others, as we seek to share our lives and equip those God gives us for works of service.
- Please pray for the Refuel Day conference on Saturday 23rd April, and ask that God would really bless this initiative and bring together the right people, for a really helpful day focused on Jesus.
- We would also value your prayers for Formation School as we work out this vision from Ephesians 4:11-16 to move them towards maturity, and prepare them for works of service.
- Please pray for the Navigators summer programmes to Norway, Poland, Slovakia, USA & Central Asia (navigators.co.uk/stp). Please pray for Steve and Stu Newland, as they navigate the risks from COVID19 and the more recent global instability because of the war in Ukraine.
- Pray too for our contributions to the Nav-Mums initiative (Debs), and the Wales & England Leadership Team (Steve). Ask God to move these ministry areas forward in unity, maturity and works of service.

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