

Hi, hope you are well.

This term has been a very exciting one for me doing the course Form and numerous other things involved with Form. St Tom's Church Philadelphia is a massive church with around 2000 members, numerous different buildings and a lot of different events and activities going on to get involved with. This has been a very big culture change for me as I was previously involved with my Dads parish churches which were great but not quite on the same size scale as St Tom's. I have felt just being in a church of this size has helped me grow massively in my life with Jesus and has also hugely increased my faith. I have started to see miracles of healing happening a lot more, and seeing loads of others, of similar ages to me all worshipping together on a Sunday has been a real encouragement.

The actual course has also been fantastic, although very tiring. I have had loads of teaching over the past couple of months, these teaching sessions are given by a variety of different leaders from around the church, and many of these have been very inspiring. There are five different themes to our teaching; these are Faith, Identity, Community, Discipleship and Service. I find I am constantly learning new things in these teaching sessions and am leaving inspired. There are two which I am very excited about at the minute, these are Faith and discipleship. I think over the past few months I have really gone on a big journey and am steadily, if not sometimes reluctantly, trying to give every bit of my life to Jesus and his plans. This is really hard as I, and I'm sure most people, struggle with money, sex and power. But I am steadily giving these up and trying to give my whole life over to the service of Gods kingdom. Faith has also been another big growing point as I am trying to renew my mind so I am starting to see miracle as something which happens in the normal Christian life. This is great as it makes Christianity exciting and adventurous, knowing I have that massive power and potential in me is an awesome feeling and one I hope to grow in hugely over my life. On the course we also spend time in Bible study. This has also been great as I'm not a big reader so although I tried I didn't read anywhere near as much as I should of. We are currently doing the New Testament, and have done Mark, John, Acts and Galatians. At the minute I am currently reading the Old Testament and am near the end of Samuel. We have also had speakers come in and give overviews of the Old and New Testament.

The afternoons consist of three different things. We have all been put in to small huddles where we can talk about how things are going, and use these as a smaller sense of community. Thursday afternoons consist of either City mission or our apprenticeship. City mission is where we do some event linked to evangelising to the City. Recently we have done a treasure hunt. This is where we sit and pray for a time and ask God to give us clues e.g. a yellow coat, or starbucks or something along those lines. Then we get in to groups and try and put our clues together and go and see if God has led us to anyone in particular. I have found this to have mixed success, sometimes we've found people who are really open, other times we haven't found anyone at all but I guess I am still learning how to hear from God and step out properly.

The other thing we do on Thursdays is our apprenticeship. For mine I picked to work with

the prayer and intercession co-ordinator of the church. This has been amazing and through this I have really grown in my relationship with Christ. With this I am helping to head up prayer support networks for different leaders in the church, arranging prayer cover for certain events and also trying to help organise the prayer and intercession course at the church which will be held next year, starting in January. This apprenticeship also involves various other events and meetings. So through this I am attending many different prayer meetings, many of these are just a small bunch of people praying for the city and church. Many of the leaders of the church attend these meetings and I've just been so inspired and amazed at the prayer they speak, the visions they have and the prophetic words they get.

Overall I have had a great first term and feel this is going to be a great year to lay the foundations for my life in the future. As I said though, It has also been very tiring and I am really looking forward to a bit of time off over Christmas.

Thank you so much for your support and your prayers, they are much appreciated. Hope you have a great Christmas and I will update you again near Easter time.

Best wishes

Andy Rhodes