Newsletter - Update from Eve at Rock UK, Whithaugh Park



The last couple of months have been incredible! I've been challenged mentally, physically and spiritually in outdoor sessions, classroom style discipleship sessions. I've formed strong relationships with everyone on the course, as we've supported, encouraged and often challenged each other. It's been incredible to see the group grow in number from 16 to 19.
I am constantly amazed by how quickly we have all settled in and we have all expressed how fortunate we are to be a part of this course.



During our first week here we were taken for a windy walk up Blencathra. This was an amazing opportunity to get to know who we're living with during the first 3 months. We spent hours sharing testimonies and jokes growing closer to each other.



One of the first training rotations we did was 'learning the ropes' - quite literally. We spent three days learning how to set up the ropes for sessions in climbing, high ropes and abseiling, as well as having a go at each activity ourselves. Here I'm about to abseil down the tower, trusting that Ben has fully learned how to tie the safety knots necessary for an abseil rescue. This is for the very rare instances where children get hair or fingers stuck in the mechanism during their descent.

We spent a couple of days on the lake on site learning the basics to paddling kayaks and canoes, before we headed off for a day in the Lakes on Ullswater. We had a great time; the weather was amazing, the views were stunnning, and I improved my paddling technique and confidence.

Probably the scariest activity we have done so far is lead climbing. As we climb up a crag, we place equipment in cracks to clip our ropes into to catch us if we fall. The fear of the repocussions of misplacing gear was both frightening and exhilarating, and by the end of the day felt rewarding.





Alongside outdoor activities, the course offers discipleship sessions in the classroom on Thursdays and Fridays. Theses are delivered by external speakers who have touched upon teaching of the trinity, how to read the Bible, what worship is, and methods of sharing Christianity with visitors on site. All of these have prompted me to reflect on the bible's teachings and what this means in my faith, and led to fascinating discussions with the other trainees.

One key takeaways for me was about how to read the bible: how context and perspective changes what we notice in the Bible or shapes the way we read it. When we read the Bible, we bring our own experiences with God. This can be shaped by key figures in our lives, age, gender, questions we are already asking, things we want to be true, or things that we have been taught. Our lense effects what we notice, and to get a fuller understanding of this landscape we can listen to other people. People who are different to us, come from other Christian traditions, people we disagree with or are from different periods of history, and listen to the Spirit.





One of the great joys of this course is that as a whole, we have a lot in common, meaning there's always someone up for anything. Five of us cycled to a nearby village at sunrise to have a morning hot drink and pastry which was delicious, scenic, and a joy to chat to the locals in the cafe. I am so blessed to have these opportunities on my doorstep.

Above is also a photo of many of us taking a cold dip in the river that flows just below site, a regular occurrence that doesn't seem to get any easier over time.

On Sundays, we're all shuttled down to Carslile where we join the Elim Community church for the 9.30 service. For the past few weeks we've been focussing on the story of Joshua and the battle of Jericho. On Tuesday evenings we split into three home groups and work through resources based on meals with Jesus. This is a great opportunity to delve deeper into the Bible and share our thoughts in a relaxed environment. This is strengthening my faith and understanding which I am hoping to pass on to those that join us for activities next term.

I am excited to see where this course will lead me this half term up until Christmas. Already I have seen answers to my prayers in the people I have met here, the outdoor opportunities, and the loving Christian atmosphere sewn into the fabric of the whole organisation.

Thank you for your ongoing support through prayers, messages and donations. Your love has aided the smooth and exciting start to my placement here and it was lovely catching up with a handful of you last Sunday at church.



Many blessings,
Eve