

Philip Whelton, Irish Mission Worker

Report – April-May 2015

“Investing time with our teenagers”

The last several months have been quite busy here during the church vacancy. We have been encouraged that our church has been given leave to call and so we continue to ask you to be in prayer for the right person to join us and partner with us in our congregation.

During the vacancy we have been anything but vacant, whether it be in our approach, attitude and actions. Our attendance has remained steady and the congregation has a sense of purpose and determination as we move forward in the next few years implementing our mission plan. One obvious result of this is the running of two Bible Studies every Tuesday evening in different homes. There has been good attendance and great discussions as we study God's Word together. We have also been encouraged by some from the community who have joined us as well.

There are always a lot of activities at the church, with many groups using our premises, and this has been a great way to get to know some of the local people and organizations within our own doors. To help tap into this we now run a Coffee Dock on Mondays and a Mum and Toddler group on Tuesdays. This is run on an informal basis in order to get to know the people who come, but it's also a way to share our faith with those who attend. We have about 15 families who come between the two days.

The Wednesday Bible Club and Friday Youth and Teens Club continue to encourage us as they are well respected in the community, for which all glory is the Lord's. All the Clubs have excellent attendance and we never cease to be amazed at how much the children look forward to the clubs and also the privilege to be able to tell them Bible lessons that are so appropriate for their lives.

The Youth and Teens ministry varies greatly and we deal with so many of the issues that all teenagers face today. That so many of them come each week is a testament to the grace of God and an encouragement to us. We always have a lot of opportunities for conversations with them; so many are facing difficulties that are not their own making. It's so important to be available for them, as you never know when your last conversation with them will be. We spend quite a bit of time on follow up outside the clubs, which has proved priceless as that is usually the time where trust is built and relationships made stronger.

Through all of this I am learning that we must establish relationships with people knowing that they will listen to us on the basis of what they see in our lives, and not merely on the basis of our words. And I can't say this enough - that ministry cannot replace Jesus or our time with Him. It's very easy to get carried away with so many things to do that we neglect time with the One we

are doing it for. So please pray that we will maintain an unswerving loyalty to Christ through our own personal relationship with Jesus that is sustained through a daily personal and intimate relationship with Christ.