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## STORIES OF CHURCH LIFE DONE DIFFERENTLY

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### Young Adults Ministry

**First Comber, Katie McBurney**

After a prompting to go local with our church life, my husband and I joined First Comber, coinciding with the introduction of lockdown. The best way to get to know and invest in a community is through serving and there seemed to be a need for young adults' provision, so with this age group being on our hearts we accepted the offer to take it on.

You might question the need for a young adults ministry, assuming that once out of youth the young adults can just slip into the wider church community, but that would be ignoring the tempestuous stage of life that 18-25's can be. Whilst it will differ for each of us, for the most part it is a time of change. A shift in dynamics in the family home or moving out, higher education, getting a first-time job, maybe a serious relationship or even marriage. Suddenly in charge of their time, money and future, young adults need support in such change, and for this generation with the world in their pockets it is all too easy to turn to smartphones for guidance rather than the church and the Bible.

So here we find our young adults no longer being dropped off by their parents at the church youth group or helping run a BB/GB or cut off from regular church attendance through Covid-19. How could we possibly help the young adults get grounded in the church community and turn it into their first point of call? Connection is our answer and our goal.

- Connection to God comes through Bible studies, worship and prayer with encouragement for a daily devotional life and each of us sharing over WhatsApp what challenged us.
- Connection to one another is about enjoying time together and what we have done this year has mostly been in 2's and 3's. Whilst Covid has made more intimate meet ups necessary, we think more regular, ordinary socialising in the week - walks or coffees - is more important than one off group trips.
- Connection to culture is about helping the young adults learn how to engage with the surrounding culture in a healthy mature manner - allowing ourselves to be in the world but not of it. Book clubs and watching films critically can expand our understanding of the world we find ourselves in especially when we open it out to discussion.
- Connection to Comber is where we seek to increase our young adults love of the town they are in. We each find ourselves where God has placed us and whilst many might move on, we need to invest in where we are right now.

Most ministries have a programme at the centre which is followed week in week out to teach, prompt and assess. We don't have such a thing. For us we have found that honest, open relationship with the freedom to bring ideas and questions forward shapes what we do with our scheduled time.

Most of what happens with our young adults is organic and short notice as you would find with most friendship groups.

So how do we invest in our young adults without a programme? Week in, week out we pray for one another, we go for impromptu walks, we do a Sunday evening Bible study, opening and discussing what we read honestly without agenda. We have book groups for diving into heavier topics and meet ups for more personal conversation. We will plan for summer activities to enjoy together and hope to be able to offer an open-door policy on our house in the not too distant future but mostly we just have connection.

And this isn't our idea at all, it was Jesus' as he chose not to set a programme for his disciples to roll out, but instead said 'come, follow me'.