

Following on from our last Juniors' Forum,<sup>1</sup> we focus on three groups to see how God is working in different ways around the country



# JUNIORS' FELLOWSHIP GROUPS



## HULL

**N**ew city, new job, new church... This is a familiar pattern for junior doctors, as training requires moving every few months or years. It's easy to feel unsettled and without anyone to turn to when life gets tough. This was my position when I first joined the *Hullies* in this friendly, quirky and remote part of Yorkshire. The junior doctors' group is a thriving support network, blessed by a local retired GP who offers up his house for dinner, discussion and prayer almost every week. With shifts, we can't all make it every time, but we know that we are always welcome to drop-in (even if it's just for the famous 'fusion risottos').

This year, we have been working through *Values Added*, a programme from PRIME (Partnerships in International Medical Education),<sup>2</sup> which has been challenging us about providing whole person medicine in the NHS. We share stories from the front line and discuss our dilemmas about how to live out our faith at work with accountability. We discuss what we have learnt and how it has made

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an impact on our everyday work. CMF provides plenty of resources for us to tap into for our discussions, and since I have been in Hull we have completed two courses: *Saline Solution*<sup>3</sup> and *The Human Journey*.<sup>4</sup>

While we are served by our juniors' group, we know it is important to serve the next cohort of juniors, and so we have linked with the local student group to run Bible studies and to support them to live out their faith as they step out on to the wards for the first time.

How could your group of juniors meet intentionally? How are you going to support and challenge each other as you train as Christian doctors?

## PORTSMOUTH



This year, God has shown me the importance of little steps. Those seemingly 'trivial' conversations and 'fruitless' tasks can be woven together by God into something marvellous. Since moving to Portsmouth (somewhat reluctantly, I might add!) for Core Medical Training I have seen a small, but steadily growing, community of Christian healthcare workers develop.

God goes ahead of us and prepares the way for us to walk in. Long before I arrived, God had been stirring up the hearts of various individuals working within the hospital. There was a nurse working in training and development, who had for many years been faithfully, and often solitarily, praying for Christians within the hospital to unite and change the atmosphere – big dreams from a lady with a very big heart! There was also a pharmacist who felt prompted to run a hospital-based Alpha course for staff, and a research nurse with a heart for Christian community. All these individuals had desires that seemed no closer to realisation than when they were first thought of. Yet God led me again and again into conversations with many who were

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looking to see their identity as Christians impact their 'everyday' moments within the hospital.

As I worked, I met and formed friendships with Christian doctors, nurses and pharmacists, and over the past three years we have seen a small hospital-based Alpha course completed, started a monthly prayer meeting and now have a group of Christians who meet for food, fellowship and prayer at a home near the hospital. Though I haven't seen anything change significantly within the hospital, I have been very blessed by the fellowship and encouragement of fellow believers. I have been challenged to live more boldly for Christ and to trust that nothing, not a single moment is wasted with God.

## WEST YORKSHIRE



Long shifts, random hours, and rotating every few months to different hospitals can take their toll on junior doctors, disrupting the usual rhythms of seeing family and friends, doing food shopping, exercise, and for Christians, church, small groups, and even quiet times – all things we need to stay well in mind, body and spirit. It can be difficult to switch off after intense shifts, especially when many specialities (including my own, paediatrics) are understaffed. You may feel that family and friends just don't understand. Not to mention exams and portfolios etc...

In West Yorkshire, we have created a 'home from home' for all our trainees. We have monthly events in the homes of members of our Catalyst Team,<sup>5</sup> where we share food and are ministered to. We often have a talk, but just as precious is the time before and during our meals catching up with everyone, from friends we've known for many years, to those on the same training schemes, to new additions – we have everyone from pre-medical students to retired consultants. In many ways, this set-up provides for us what we lack at work – a mix of juniors and seniors sharing life and supporting each other.

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We have run a series of Bible studies focused on resilience. We dug into how and why we can feel challenged by serious incidents, difficult working environments and what truths we can take from the Bible (as our armour) in what can feel like an uphill struggle. People were open about mental health problems and what they have found helpful to keep themselves going.

As CS Lewis put it: 'Friendship... is born at the moment when one man says to another "What! You too? I thought that no one but myself ..."'<sup>6</sup> This really sums up what we aspire to in West Yorkshire, because when you know that God is with you and your friends are with you too, everything feels possible again.

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To share your stories email [Juniorsforum@cmf.org.uk](mailto:Juniorsforum@cmf.org.uk)

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