

local groups: Southampton

Daisy Wood encourages us to meet together



Daisy Wood is a medical student in Southampton

If asked what the hardest part of the COVID-19 pandemic has been, many of us would respond by saying that the isolation and separation from family and friends has taken the biggest toll. Whether we have lost loved ones, grown distant from friends, or have simply been unable to return home from university for holidays or the occasional weekend, many people are emerging from the pandemic with a renewed understanding of the importance of interpersonal relationships, and the positive impact they have on our mental and spiritual health.

The student CMF Southampton group has been incredibly blessed by the community that surrounds us. We have an involved and actively engaged group of both retired and working CMF doctors and their families, who go above and beyond to support us during our time at medical school. Pre-pandemic, we shared fellowship and food with talks and teaching at the home of a local doctor on a monthly basis. Although it was distressing to temporarily have to set aside such meetings, that 'family feeling' has been well maintained this past year through our weekly prayer meetings. These meetings, held on Zoom and open to CMF students from all courses and year groups, have been a time for us to gather and lift each other up in prayer - and on many occasions have been a source of great joy, laughter, conversation, and fellowship of other kinds, too!

'For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them'. (Matthew 18:20) Even in the darkest times, when we come together to pray, we are assured by Scripture that God is alongside us. Equally, we are called in Deuteronomy to remember that the Lord goes with us, that he will not leave us or forsake us. As fear swept through the world, those Monday evening prayer meetings provided pockets of peace in the storm.



The biggest lesson for me from the last year has been the confirmation that when we are intentional about coming together as a group before the Lord, whether we are separated by location, time zone, or technological problems, it is clear that we are never truly alone, despite how disconnected we may feel. I would encourage all local CMF groups to re-establish regular fellowship meetings, and watch God move in amazing ways through the power of prayer. ■