

STREET PASTORS – Francesca Adams’ Talk on December 8th/9th 2012

Thank you so much for having me here today to speak to you about Street Pastors. My name’s Francesca and I’m the development co-ordinator for street pastors.

Street Pastors – In the beginning

Before I start telling you about the things Street Pastors are planning to do in this area, I want to just tell you a bit about Street Pastors in a wider context. (1) Street Pastors was set up 10 years ago by a man called Les Isaac. He had seen, in London and other cities, (2) a rise in gang crime, a rise in the distribution of fire arms and it broke his heart. He was from Jamaica and on one of his visits to Jamaica he met 2 men who had empowered the church to do pastoring out on the streets and this inspired him. He then came back to London and started a project called (3) Street Pastors, at first in Brixton - an area where drug and gun crime were rife. He inspired the local church to start engaging people out on the streets, as Street Pastors, and over time God moved and change happened.

Street Pastors - Nottingham

(4) 8 years later a woman called Jo Cox-Brown walked around the city centre of Nottingham at night and (5) saw girls slumped on the street with sick all down them, she saw fights then ended with murder, she read stories in the newspaper of girls being raped after being abandoned by friends when they were out for a night out and God broke her heart about it.

(6) Jo then, out of that broken place said to God, ‘God what are you doing about this?’

She then thought and decided Street Pastors would be a good response to the issues she saw around her and then asked the chief inspector of the city police if she could start street pastors in Nottingham city centre on a Saturday night. He said no, so she phones the chief inspector everyday to ask if she could start street pastor till he said yes!

Where we’re at now

(7) 3 years on from that, Street Pastors now go out into the city centre between 10-3am to serve the people using the night time economy. The project in Nottingham had around 100 volunteers from churches across the city. Violence against person crime has dropped by 45% at the times that street pastors are out and present in the city.

Street Pastors - Vision

(8) The real vision and heart behind Street Pastor is to bring light into the darkest places. Bring hope, when people see no hope at all.

Development intro

So, where we’re at now: A few months ago the crime and drugs partnership approached Street Pastors and asked us to start looking at the potential of set up street pastors in some other areas. The 4 areas they asked us to look at where; Bulwell, Broxtowe, Sneinton and St Anns. After research the areas we decided to launch Street pastors into (9) Bulwell and have a joint Sneinton/St Anns project.

Area info

Before I go into the logistics of what that means for this church and the community I’m going to briefly tell you what we found and have seen in this area, Bulwell.

(10) While there is not an established gang culture in Bulwell some friendship groups are displaying gang like tendencies.

Many people in Bulwell suffer from drug addiction and people will often come into Bulwell from other areas to buy their drugs.

In Nottingham city Bulwell has the 3rd highest rate of domestic violence, 3rd highest rate of deprivation and the 2nd highest rate for unemployment.

Low aspirations has been identified as a key problem in Bulwell and this may stem from another issue of there being very few healthy role models for children and young people to look up to.

Now I’ve only told you a brief over view. There were many more issues and things we sensed that you’re welcome to ask me about but I really just wanted to give you a sense of what we’re looking at in these areas.

Whole church response

(11) So after looking at these areas we decided that a Street Pastors scheme could work but for it to work a whole church response was needed.

Street Pastor roles

So, why am I talking to you today about all this stuff? Well, you guys are a clear part of that whole church response. We're looking for people who are willing to get their hands dirty and get stuck in with these problems and communities. There are 2 main roles that we are looking for people to fill.

First is a street pastor. (12) These are the people who go out onto the streets and actively engage with the people whether that's playing football with a group of young people, helping an elderly person carry their shopping home, chatting to a young mother whose baby won't stop crying etc.

The second role is a prayer pastors. (13) These are people who are keen to be prayer warriors. Engaging in prayer is one of the key things that we believe will change the area and make Street pastors successful. The idea behind prayer pastors is that they will be praying the whole time that street pastors are out on the streets. We know that prayer changes things, which is why this is a vital role within the street pastors project.

Heart behind street pastor estates

The idea and heart behind being a street pastor in these areas is (14) relationship. We're looking for men and women that are not just willing to be street pastors when they're in uniform but people who are willing to engage in relationships with their communities all the time. A street pastor may meet a young mum on street pastors who is struggling and clearly isolated. We're looking for people who would be up for getting that mum's number and phoning her the next day or meeting her for coffee to see how she is getting on.

Logistics

(15) So logistically, we're recruiting people now to be street pastors, starting training on the 19th January and launching a trial at the end of February.

People who volunteer for Street Pastors will be given training on a wide range of issues including youth and gang culture, drugs, alcohol, domestic violence etc.

The minimum commitment that we ask for from a street pastor is one street pastor session a month for a year.

During the trial Street Pastor sessions will be at different times. The times we're thinking of trialling are Friday and Saturday 6-10pm and 8-midnight and Saturday 2-6pm although these times may change during the trial.

(16) To start off with we will be covering the area that is shown on this map. Going up as far as Bulwell academy and down as far as Rempstone Drive. Like the times, the area may change slightly during or after the trial so we can make sure we spend most of our time in the places that Street Pastors are needed.

Praying and giving financially

It may be that you're hearing all this and you'd love to be involved but you just can't commit to a project like this and there are other ways to be involved. We'd love people to pray for us outside being official prayer pastors and we would love people to give financially to Street Pastors. Please do let me know if you're interested in either of those things and we can start getting you involved in that way.

Finish

(17) If anyone has any questions I will be around after the service and I'd love to chat with you about some of this stuff but if you need to shoot off you can email me or phone me and we can chat about it then.

Thanks so much for having me, it's been a pleasure and I'll hopefully be able to chat to some of you after the service.