



Sharing Our Story...

Hoole Baptist Church, Chester, Cheshire

Andy Glover has been part of Hoole Baptist Church for 25 years, and through this time his role has changed considerably. Andy started as Youth Pastor, then became the Pastor and now is known as the Team Leader. In recent years, the church has been on a journey of multiplication from one 'gathered congregation' to missional communities and also a plant into a local estate in Blacon. These missional communities are at the very core of how HBC 'does' church. Andy's description is: "We are one church, but many missional communities. These communities form around a common focus, desiring to be like and love like Jesus in different and relevant ways to the people or interest groups, geographies, schools or work places they serve." Here, Andy shares how these missional communities have drawn people to God and created opportunities to share the Good News.

"Recently at HBC Chester, we held an evening with a couple of baptisms. One of the people being baptised was Penny. Penny is a Core Team member in one of our Missional Communities (MC). Penny's decision to be baptised is a result of the growth in her own personal discipleship journey and a significant part of this has been the commitment Penny has made to be involved in our regular IPODs (Intentional Places of Discipleship – our version of a huddle).

The MC Penny is part of has developed a strong focus on the 'People of Peace' that a number of the Core team know and they have held regular gatherings where these people have been involved. They have also started up an "Inter-nation Forum". This has been going for about a year, takes place once a month and includes the people of peace telling their stories of living in the UK and what life was like in the country of birth. We've also run events to develop friendships and in the summer we held a barbeque in the local park, played 'crocker' (a camp game based on cricket but using a football). Friendships deepened, conversations went to a new level, and our friends are asking questions about the Christian faith. We've been able to share discussions in a natural and respectful way.

As a result of the developing and strengthening relationships within the MC, Penny was able to invite these people of peace to come and witness her baptism. 12 people of peace came along, heard Penny's testimony and began to see the wider context of church and community that the MC belongs too."

For your consideration, reflection and prayers:

In what ways does your church connect with the wider community it finds itself in?

Who are the 'people of peace' in your context?

How easy is it for people of different cultures to integrate into your church community?