

THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SHED



People's Church Partington, Manchester

People's Church Partington recently partnered with other Baptist churches in neighbouring towns to deliver a Men's weekend entitled 'The Dark Night of the Shed' with Christian author Nick Page. Here, the minister at the People's Church, Jonathan Boyers, shares the story of how the weekend came about and the impact it has had in the life of the church...

"We came together with Altrincham Baptist Church and Lymm Baptist Church over the course of a Friday evening, Saturday morning and Saturday evening. Each church hosted one of the sessions, and we had a really memorable weekend with Nick, on a number of different levels.

Firstly, the food was amazing! We were blessed by some fine cuisine as Lymm prepared curry and hot pot for 80 blokes, Altrincham provided bacon barmes for the Saturday morning and we held a barbeque on one of the coldest weekends of the year (snow in March, who'd have thought!). The meals were really valuable times - you don't often see men eating communally (except maybe in prison?) but having the chance to sit down together, spend time in conversation and getting to know one another was great.

Secondly, it was great to work with other churches on something that was bigger than anything we could do on our own. Doing this together meant so many more men connected with what was a really important message. It also gave men from each church the opportunity to network and connect with a sense of the bigger picture of the church family, and strengthened the already good existing relationships between the churches.

Thirdly, the content of the weekend was really helpful. The theme was around men and mid-life crisis, and Nick helped us begin to explore and discuss themes that men don't naturally tend to be too open about. He drew us to explore what we believe about ourselves, where we find our identity, and called us back to some of the disciples of following Jesus: solitude and silence, scripture reading and prayer, pilgrimage, serving, Sabbath and submission. Our time together closed with an opportunity for men to have their hands 'anointed for the tasks God was calling them to' and we all returned to our homes and our sheds well fed, both spiritually and physically.

For your consideration, reflection and prayers:

In what ways does your church connect with other local and neighbouring churches?

What could you do together, that you simply can't do on your own?

What does ministry to and among men look like in your church? How could this area of church life be strengthened?