

Many of us live busy lives and finding a spare evening out with your partner is not always easy. Angela & Phil are one of our first married couples who now spend most Fridays enjoying the night life of Stalybridge as Street Pastors!



Angela is a teaching assistant for special needs and first heard about this work through the BBC, at that time she thought you had to be a minister to be eligible. This wrong impression was soon corrected and she joined Class 08. Her husband Phil, a GP in Oldham was reluctant to get involved, he was a shy and reserved man who had a deep but quiet faith. That all changed when he signed up just days before the training course started. Those who know Phil can't believe he is the same man; *"things moved to a whole new level after he stepped out in faith"*.

So many people who have joined Street Pastors have found their faith deepening, themselves becoming more confident and able to deal with challenging situations; *"Being a Street Pastor really puts your faith to the test"*.

They have been part of the Harpurhey and Hollinwood teams but this year saw them take the lead in setting up the new Stalybridge team. Backing them are many of the local churches, statutory groups and largest Prayer Pastor team in Greater Manchester, some 19 people, praying for their community and team.

Neighbourhood Inspector Bill Callaghan gave his voice of support "I recognised the potential within Street Pastors to make a difference in Stalybridge Town Centre and I remain confident that it will become an even safer night time venue in the coming months because of the work of the Street Pastor volunteers."

Friday 9th July was the teams commissioning service and first night



out. If you do not know what Stalybridge is like then the local nick-name might give you a clue: 'Staly-Vegas'. During the day it is a picturesque market town, at night in a confined area it is alive with 25 night clubs and pubs, with people coming from all over to enjoy themselves to the early hours of the morning. For the team their night starts at 9.00pm to 3.00am the following day.

As I write they have been out only three nights, but already they have made a big impact. There is just enough room for one story for you.

Your first night out and you find £10 on the floor with no way of knowing whose it is; how lucky can you get?

The Street Pastors thought they would put it to good use. Literally within a couple of minutes they came across a lady in her 40's who was worse for wear, obviously affected by alcohol, she was on her own and vulnerable. She was hoping to get a bus home but at that time of night buses were not running.

They encouraged her to get a taxi but she didn't have enough money and so decided to walk the several miles home, but in reality she could

hardly stand let alone walk. She did not have enough money but the Street Pastors were £10 richer; they called a taxi, it was like 'manna from heaven' - God's provision at the right time.

The taxi driver had read about the pastors in the local Advertiser the previous week and was very pleased to meet them and help out. Before they bundled her into the taxi she gave them all hugs and was really grateful.

The following week Angela wanted to thank the taxi driver. She went over to speak with one of the cabbies, planning to ask him to pass on a message. From all the taxis she could have picked it was the same driver. He remembered them and was happy to help. Definitely not a coincidence!

For more information about the Stalybridge team contact Angela Trewinnard (Coordinator)

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