

Name: Martin Hinz

Destination of your trip: Northampton Emmanuel Group of Churches

*How has your life been changed as a result of your experience? What will you do differently as a result of your experience?*

I appreciated that I was trusted and given responsibility. That gave me self-confidence, made me feel, that I was part of the church and could do something useful. As a minister I'd like to empower people, give them responsibility, let them do things their way and support them. I was fascinated that Haydon, the minister sometimes just had been there and telling everybody that we were doing well. By that he gave the people a safe space to make their experience. That had a big impact on how many people were volunteering in the church, did part-time or full-time ministry. It led to the fact that they liked it, felt needed and meaningful. As a minister I'll try to do the same, even if I find it difficult to value something, when it's not as good as it could be – but I'm working on that. In addition to that I'm now generally aware of how difficult, complex but potentially beautiful leading a church can be.

My life was also changed by being confronted with the fear of talking to strangers. I think I'm not there already, but from time to time I got more comfortable in starting conversations in the coffee shop, which definitely will help me for different kinds of counselling.

I've seen that the concept "belonging before believing" can work quite well. It does not necessarily end up in a rather secular kind of social club, but can lead to church growth by making the social space of church accessible to everyone. I felt home at Emmanuel church, which was a great feeling and lot of others did, and later on I'd like to make the church a place where everybody is welcome.

*Would you recommend this trip/experience to someone else? Why/Why not?*

I definitely would recommend this experience, because Emanuel is a great church family, where people are really friendly and appreciate that you're there. In addition to that it's a quite unusual church, which broadens your horizon and makes you think and reflect a lot, how church can and should be. It also gives you the opportunity to do very different fields of work at church: Youth club, kids club, leading service, preaching, doing foodbank, helping in a coffee shop & talking to people, running other social activities, attending church meetings, writing statements on mission, and a lot more. I would also recommend this internship, since there is a lot to learn from Haydon about leadership, counselling, preaching, looking after yourself, connecting to people, etc. and also from Mell, the youth pastor, about running youth clubs.