

## **Hilda talks about joining her church and the opportunities it gave her as a volunteer in supporting people in Hertford.**

My life is mainly on my faith... Whilst I was doing my church shopping there was some places where you could actually say my spirit is not happy or I'm not going to grow in faith and I also wanted my son to be in a place where he is going to be groomed to be in those faiths, because I have noticed that the English culture and the African culture is totally different. But when it comes to Christianity it's kind of like more or less the same. So I wanted to bridge that gap.

So, we tried Hertford Baptist church, that was in 2003, and boy that was *the* place, that was *the* place! We felt welcomed, we felt accepted and the children were for the age of my son, most of them were also from Sele School, so we felt comforted and accepted.

The Hertford Baptist Church gave me the room to grow in my public services. In the period of 2003 up to now, I got into volunteering to give back to the public for what my son and myself got, because it was overwhelming... So, offering ourselves to people was just natural. My son then joined the youth ministry, you know, the Young Life...

Giving that back to the community, to what that group had done for my son, I joined Future Hope... Future Hope is mainly to safeguard children, especially in the night, where the young people, the teenagers, are not in a good place, at home or at school. They roam around the town intoxicated. So, we had to learn how to comfort them, how to support them, how to make them feel loved and accepted... There were quite a few who were physically abused, mentally abused, you know, alcohol abuse in their homes. They didn't feel that much of attention from their parents, 'cos lots of the parents they were working nightshifts, or, too tired with doing extra jobs, they don't see their children. Some, we are actually helping them with homework. So that was really, really, rich, for me to be involved in that movement.

I went into Street Pastors as well. With the Street Pastors, it actually caters for everyone, it looks after the mature people who are having fun and they lose their friends and they don't know how to get home. So, you just talk to them, comfort them, and give them security... I also joined CAP, which is Christians Against Poverty, yeah, that was really, really interesting as well, you know, to meet up with people who are struggling with their finances and to help them to manage... So, everything I was doing was centred from the Hertford Baptist Church.

*That's an awful lot Hilda, you've got studying, working, raising your son and all of this volunteering, you must have been exhausted a lot of the time.*

It's true, it's true, but with that there was a lot of joy in doing it. A lot of joy and that also helped me to manage my time as well. It's more rewarding when you are enjoying what you are doing, for the benefit of others, who are struggling, there's more joy. Your fatigued. God does it in a different way. He gives you the wisdom to know how to do it and gives you the time and gives you the opportunity as well and gives you the strength, that has been my journey. Now I'm not feeling very well, you know, in my illness and the Home Group, again,

coming back to my church, so it's all centred around my church. The Home Group, they were taking turns cooking meals I would freeze and still now, I had some issues with the hospital transport, so they jumped in again to take me to different appointments. So, in a way, God remembered all my sacrifices, now that I am receiving, I am a cheerful receiver!