

FFWPU UK: Beautiful Memories Made At The *Heart Of A Father* Retreat

Michael Balcomb
November 15, 2023



Last weekend, the first Father's retreat was held at Cleeve House, Pastor Elliot Y. shares about the experience with photos...

"Twenty grandfathers and fathers united at Cleeve House on Friday, the 10th, marking the first 'Heart of a Father' retreat. Amidst diverse backgrounds, life paths, and experiences, we converged with a shared purpose: to foster brotherhood among us and reflect on our roles as male figures within our families.

Our journey started with a dinner of delightful cuisine (thankfully, a treat that continued throughout the weekend), accompanied by board games and an orientation session. Simon Cooper, our gracious host, unfolded his vision for Cleeve House, emphasising the importance of nurturing secure families and robust communities. Together, we brainstormed our collective aspirations for the weekend. The schedule was thoughtfully designed, allowing ample time for reflection, discussions, utilisation of the Cleeve House gym, and of course, stocked with an abundance of snacks and steaming hot drinks.

Saturday dawned with a newfound camaraderie, setting the stage for group discussions where we shared watershed moments from our lives and the profound lessons gleaned from our diverse experiences. Despite initial skepticism stemming from the varying age ranges among us, I found myself deeply moved and inspired by the testimonies and anecdotes shared. We witnessed incredible narratives of resilience, trials, and unwavering determination to nurture and sustain relationships. The afternoon was enlivened with a friendly air rifling competition followed by a refreshing stroll amidst the picturesque rolling hills of the West Country. As the day drew to a close, we were graced by a deeply personal testimony from long-serving Pastor, Franklin Fortune, highlighting the depth of our hearts and our boundless capacity to love. Dr. Balcomb then delivered an impactful message, drawing upon paternal guidance to navigate the various stages of life.

Finally, Sunday culminated in group discussions and a reflective review of the invaluable experiences we shared throughout the weekend. I enjoyed the diverse perspectives and unique contributions from each participant. While many were familiar faces by name, the retreat afforded an opportunity to delve deeper, comprehend their circumstances, and forge meaningful connections. I am immensely grateful not only for attending the inaugural Heart of a Father retreat but also for the enriching experience of co-organising this memorable event alongside Simon C."



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