



What is it like to be a Bedford Street Angel.

Being a Bedford Street Angel is a privilege and this is a great ministry to those who frequent Bedford city centre late on a Saturday evening and the early hours of Sunday morning. Last Saturday night was the second time that I have been out as a Bedford Street Angel and the first time for Alan Harpham,

The evening starts at 10 p.m. as we assemble at the Salvation Army's headquarters which is our base. Each time that I'd been out I have been part of a different group of people, which is great for getting to know different Christians from around Bedford. Usually there are two teams of three people. First we are divided up into teams, and there is a team leader in each group (on this occasion I was one).

Each team has a kitbag which it takes out. This has stuff in it like bottles of water, a torch, cigarette lighters, taxi cards, bus and train timetables, New Testaments, flip-flops (for the ladies who are finding it hard to walk in their shoes) and Antiseptic wipes. We also have contact details for all the organisations that people may need to know.

Each team has a radio and this means that we have a direct link to the people operating the CCTV cameras and the taxi marshals. As well as the teams that go out onto the streets there are people back at the base that will be praying throughout the evening.

Bedford Street Angels have been going out every Saturday night now for a while and has had a good response. People are often curious as to what you are doing, and how much we are being paid. Once you have explained to them that you are there to keep an eye out for them, to pray for them, to make sure they get home safely, and we don't get paid anything for it, looks of drunken bewilderment are very common! I have had no negative experience from anybody when I've explained what we are doing on the streets, people seem really pleased that there are people looking out for them.

There is no particular route in which we walk we just make sure that we go past the nightclubs and pubs and chat with the door staff. Again we have had a really positive response from the door staff and taxi marshals, and also the police.

The first part of the evening there is a lot of movement between the clubs and pubs until around 12.30am. After then they are not allowed to move between the clubs so the centre is busy with people queuing to get into the clubs. At this time we stand around the centre just keep an eye on things. If you sense that there is trouble brewing then we just moved to where it is and you stand and pray. Fights are not as common as one may think as there is a good police presence within the centre and situations are diffused quickly.

We don't just concentrate on the centre but also walk around looking for people that may have got lost, or have been separated from their groups. Inevitably we come across those who have had too much to drink, and maybe laid in doorways or on the pavement. If the sight of somebody being sick turns your stomach then think hard about coming out as an angel. We check that they are okay, offer them some water, and if we think they are okay to get home then we move on. We very often go back to where we have seen people just to make sure that they have moved on safely.

Partway through the evening we head back to the base for a cup of tea and some toast. This is a welcome break and gives us an opportunity to restock the bags and possibly shuffle the teams around. The last club kicks out at four o'clock in the morning so ideally the teams would be out until then. The two evenings that I have been out have been really quiet ones, so we have finished around 3.15am. We then head back to the base where we write a brief account of what happened throughout the evening and then finish by praying together. .

If you feel that you would like to support this Ministry, either by committing yourself to praying for it, or even and signing up to be a Street Angel then I hope that this report will give you some insight into the great work is doing. For more info why not have a look at the web site [www.bedfordstreetangels.org.uk](http://www.bedfordstreetangels.org.uk) or speak to ether Alan or myself.

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