

## In Action – Intimacy with God

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It was the Saturday night event of a packed weekend of activities at Youth Together 2014. Our musical guests for the weekend were Grounded – a Christian band who had reunited for this event, celebrating the place it had all began a decade earlier. We wanted Grounded to have the opportunity to rock it out for our teens and young adults. In an attempt to create a true concert atmosphere there were admission tickets, creative lighting, pumped-up sound system, standing room only and an intermission. It had the makings of a great night.

For the evening, Grounded had made one request. They wanted a short devotional time at intermission. Rock concert and devotions seemed like an odd combination, but it was their night to shine so we agreed. There would be two sets, with the first one being mellow and worshipful, a break for devotions, and then the second set would ramp it up.

As the youth lined up outside Chebucto Hall there was a sense of electricity in the air. They were so excited, and with tickets in hand, passed the two "bouncers" on the doors and made their way into the hall. It felt like the real thing.

Grounded opened with Matt Redman's song, "Here with You". The youth were engaged as they worshipped, some with hands raised, others eyes closed. There was a true sense of the Holy Spirit's presence; it was amazing. We all enjoyed this time but we (as leaders) were still thinking, the "concert" is yet to come.

The first set passed quickly. Soon it was time for the devotion. I think the youth were initially a bit taken aback, but they listened and were respectful as our young leaders, Taylor and Frances Burton, continued in the worship atmosphere. Taylor and Fran did the usual – worship music, scripture and prayer. They were given about twenty minutes, just long enough to give the band a break and allow them to prep for the rockin' set. The intermission was almost over when Taylor made a request. "Would two or three people like to share something God is doing in your life? Maybe it happened this weekend, or at home. Just a short testimony." Good idea, we all thought. A nice conclusion to a great worship segment, yet we weren't sure if people would be brave enough to step up to the mike. Would anyone want to share? At that precise moment, it felt like the agenda of the night was pushed aside and the Holy Spirit made a clear statement. "I am taking over." Two or three turned into over twenty-five. Short testimonies turned into stories of transformation, struggle and deliverance. Youth were lined up in the aisles, waiting for their turn. There were stories of struggle; confessions of self-harm, pornography, low self-esteem, broken homes, and abuse. There were stories of prayer, peer support, and the compassion of others – stories telling where they had been and how far God had taken them. And when some asked for prayerful support, their peers literally surrounded them with prayer.



Once again the air was electrifying, but it wasn't filled with excitement, it was filled with the overwhelming power and presence of God.

As the sharing continued for over an hour, the leaders wondered how to proceed. Should we end it? How could we dare quench the Spirit in these Holy moments? Needless to say, the rockin' out concert never happened. It became a late-night prayer meeting with small groups huddled together in prayer around the building, and youth kneeling at the altar surrounded by their peers. The presence of the Holy Spirit rained down in such an amazing way.

That night everyone in that room bore witness to deep intimacy with God. It is a night that will never be forgotten.

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