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## **Ngong Hills Hike – June 2024**

It all started with a telephone call from Mike, a friend and fellow member of our Small Christian Community (SCC) on Thursday 30th May 2024 just before midday. An SCC is a small group of Catholics from the same parish who pray and discuss Bible passages together. Mike and I rarely talk on the phone, and I rarely take personal calls while in the middle of my daily work activities, I normally send an auto reply to call back, but I didn't want to miss this one.

08/20/2024

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Having been members of the same group for several years we have both witnessed that the brotherly closeness between the men in the group has become very lukewarm.

We normally meet in the church and then in the group meetings still held within the church compound after which we disperse and meet the following Sunday. In consequence, we have noted that several men are struggling quietly in their families especially in relationships with their spouses.

Mike requested me as the senior and eldest member in the group, to take the lead to bring the men together. We agreed to call a meeting of all the men on Sunday 2nd June after Mass to visit one of our members who has been recuperating after a road accident. We met in a hotel in Kikuyu town on Sunday where Mike brought along our friend who was recuperating. The turnout was commendable with about eight men turning up. From the discussion we had, it was obvious that men were yearning for a get together and knowing that I was a hiking

enthusiast, I was given the task of organising a hike for men only, and what an opportunity it was!

We have a saying in my community "strike while the iron is hot"; so we immediately proposed to have the hike to the nearby Ngong Hills the following Saturday 8th, but noting that some men were working that day, we agreed the following day, Sunday 9th after the 7.00am Mass. Excitement was in the air, and this was obvious from the discussions that took place on WhatsApp during the week.

I woke up to a very cold and chilly morning and having prepared myself the previous night I was ready for the hike. I still trusted the weather forecast at the Ngong Hills which predicted a cold cloudy day with no possibility of rain.

After Mass, it was exciting to note that we already had a quorum, we

had six men present and three had sent messages that they were on the way. As we waited for them, we went to a hotel for breakfast, and we were excited about the adventure ahead. While others were ordering tea, eggs and mandazis (local doughnuts), Charlo ordered a more substantial meal and this was a proof of determination to face the Ngong Hills.

By nine o'clock we were through with breakfast and with a full quorum we carpooled using two vehicles and headed to the Ngong hills.

On arrival there, we paid the entrance fee and after a group photo we took off, slowly and in one group. It was amusing to see that Bernard, one of the older members, brought a walking stick as a hiking stick, but it came in useful later when at one point in the hike he almost gave up

and the rest of us helped him to proceed.

When we started off the hike at 10.30am, Mike and Robert suggested we have some get togethers during the hike to discuss topics of importance to us both individually and as a group. We ended up having three stops for get-togethers and what exciting moments and sharing we had. The topic that opened the first session was what we had all experienced that early morning and what is normally a challenge to many people, i.e. waking up early especially on a cold morning to face the day. I could not miss telling them about the Heroic Minute.

Other topics we discussed included, how to help each other as a band of brothers and, the challenges we men face in our families, especially in discussing points of difference with

our wives in a peaceful and friendly way.

At twelve noon Ambrose led the Angelus with all of us.

The sharing was so rich that we didn't have time to get to the final turning point of the Hills, so we turned around halfway and were back to the starting point by four o'clock. And so, we finished, all of us committed and eager to return very soon and continue with the bonding sessions and, hopefully, conquer the hills.