

The latest EBA Mission Parable which we hope you will share freely.



Are we listening?

The Church was on a mission and they were excited following the launch of several new projects. One Saturday morning they decided to go into their community to tell people about what they were offering. Peter couldn't wait to share the great news about his church and so he made sure that he was first out of the door. As he walked along, he noticed a young woman trying to carry some bags full of toys.



'Hello' he said. 'I'm Peter from your local Baptist church and we're out and about today to tell everyone about the projects we are running to bless the community'. 'I'm jus...' said the woman but Peter cut in 'you need to come to our new toddler group, it has the latest in toys and play equipment and we've even turned our baptistery into a giant ball pit. What did you say? ... You couldn't come to that ... Okay, you probably have older children and so you need to bring them to our summertime activities. We are offering a holiday club with free lunches so you can be free from your little horrors for a few hours each day'. Peter then thrust some leaflets into the woman's hand and sped feeling very pleased with himself at having shared the gospel.

Mary wasn't as keen as Peter but she knew that it was important to talk about her faith with people outside of the church. Mary was the last out the door and as she walked along she met a lady clinging to some bags full of toys and some church leaflets as she cried. Mary was supposed to be talking about church projects but instead she decided to try 'Are you okay?'

Later that day, Peter was walking back to the church to get more leaflets when he noticed Mary coming out of the coffee shop with the young woman. Peter heard Mary say 'nice to meet you Karen' before seeing Karen hug Mary tightly as she said 'thanks for listening, it was just what I needed'.

As Peter and Mary walked back to the church together Mary told him that Karen was on her way home from the contact centre where she had gone to meet her children who had been removed by social services. Tragically several buses hadn't arrived (apparently the drivers were on strike) and so Karen had missed her appointment and she was on her way home carrying the toys that she had carefully selected for her children so that they could have something familiar with them in their foster home

Karen accepted that she had made bad choices in the past but she was also trying so hard to turn her life around but she felt like it all just kept going wrong. All that changed though as Karen got to know Mary and she even began to help at the church lunch club. The food hygiene certificate was her first ever qualification and she cried when Mary gave it to her. Her experience at the lunch club even gave her the confidence to apply for a catering course in the local college. Whenever she sees Peter she tells him that she is hoping and praying for a day when she can bring her children to the church holiday club.

We may not have all the resources that we would like but we are all able to listen.

To consider:

People are more important than programmes. How do we keep this important emphasis central in our outreach programmes and strategies?

Do our church programmes help or hinder us from building relationships with people? Do we see ourselves just as service providers or as people who will offer time, care and friendship? Would we be more missional if we gave up all of our outreach activities and spent the time befriending people instead?

For more information about our mission strategy and to access the parables that have been circulated previously, visit [the EBA website](#). We hope they are a helpful and thought provoking resource for you.