

Engaging with our Mission 23: The Island Retreat?

I'm so excited. Ben Harris has actually walked in the room. He's even more gorgeous in real life. I think I'm going to faint. When Jenny persuaded me into this weekend I have to admit I was sceptical. I mean me doing all that survival stuff, can you imagine and not to mention it is quite expensive. But when she told me who was running it, well that was it, I was in. And I guess the fact we're in a five star hotel on a tropical island helps too. I'm not looking forward to going out there in the jungle but surely it won't be as bad as celebrity get me out of there. I mean they won't actually make me eat bugs will they?

We're all sat down poised and waiting for him for while he sets up. Oh my I think he just looked at me. What a stunning smile! He's saying something about ropes but I'm not really listening. Hopefully Jenny is. I'm off in a dream world when Ben suddenly runs outside. What's he doing?

"Where's he going?" Someone from the other side of the room demands.

We all rush to the window to see Ben running over to this rather lost looking man. He is putting his hand on his shoulder (oh I wish that were me) and seems to be telling him something.

"He can't just run out like that," says another angry voice.

Ben comes rushing back in. "So sorry guys but just had to deal with that crazy man who seemed to think he could just walk straight into a poisonous snake infested part of the jungle." He carries on but the angry lady who shouted out is still scowling.

Fifteen minutes later and he's running outside again.

We all watch astounded as we see Ben rescuing a child who appears to be stuck in a tree.

"Now this is not on," says the first angry man. "We have paid a lot of money for an expert and already he's run out on us twice."

"I know," shouts someone else and the rest of the room murmurs in angry agreement. I shoot Jenny a look which says 'lighten up!' but even Jenny is looking angry.

With the child rescued, Ben returns looking completely heroic. What a guy! It appears I'm the only one who thinks that though.

"Excuse me Ben but this weekend is costing us a lot of money. You are supposed to be helping us not disappearing on us every five minutes."

Ben looks surprised at the reaction.

"Sorry but that child needed help."

"Was there *really* no one else who could have helped?" Ben seems to be speechless.

"I can only apologise," he says finally. "I do appreciate you all being here. Shall we continue?"

Day two, the final day and I'm just getting into his talk about poisonous snakes when an official looking man from the hotel runs in.

"I have announcement to make. There is no need to panic but I just wanted to let you know that a volcano on the other side of the island has erupted. There is plenty of time to evacuate you all so we just need to all remain calm, pack and we will be leaving in 1 hour."

"Is anyone hurt?" asks Ben.

"I'm afraid there are some people trapped."

"I need to go and help." but his words are immediately shouted down by a chorus of people saying how much they need him to stay with them.

"We need your help and we are paying your wages."

"Here, here," cries a chorus of voices.

"You're all quite capable of looking after yourselves and you have plenty of time to use transport available to get to safety," he says.

I feel so sorry for him. He's obviously wanting to run out there and save people and if he does I'm wondering if some of us ought to use the skills we have learnt to help as well?

Parable Written by Vicky Ball

To consider:

- What should Ben do?
- How much is this parable a picture of your church life? Should Mission take second place to Maintenance?
- How can we get a good balance between loving and growing together with seeking and saving the lost?



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