

# Shorn again



**Bryn Haworth** visits the hairdresser and learns a valuable lesson about listening

“**H**ow would you like your hair cut, sir?” “In silence, please”. I love my hairdresser (in a manly way)! He’s a young black man half my age, with dreadlocks, and we get on really well. I’m usually a satisfied customer, except when he comes back from holiday.

The first time it happened I simply asked how his holiday went. He got so involved in telling me, he turned into Edward Scissorhands and I came out completely shorn!

So, for my next appointment I arrived focused and determined to direct proceedings, but then I blew it by getting carried away talking about the true meaning of Christmas and, before I knew it, I was shorn again!

So what do I do? As another human being and a follower of Christ, I am genuinely interested in him and love to hear about his life, but sometimes the answer to a simple, “How are you?” can turn into a monologue. I find myself getting so absorbed in his story that I forget to halt the fall of valuable hair.

Jesus was not only a great communicator but also a great listener. I believe it’s an important skill that can be developed and that it’s wise to be a listener (Proverbs 1:5 and John 10:27).

Part of listening is asking the right questions at the right time, for example, “Do you think that’s enough hair off for now?” But we don’t just listen with our ears. When I’m leading worship or playing in concert, I’m not just watching and listening to the people in front of me and to what I’m playing and singing, I’m also using my spiritual ears and eyes for what the Holy Spirit may want to do or say. I need to be able to change direction and be open to say, or play something that’s not been planned in order that the kingdom of God may break through. I’m still wearing L-plates here though.

It’s costly to give your time to somebody. Jesus gave his full attention

to people when they spoke and always seemed to be in the moment. He also didn’t mind being interrupted in the midst of his work.

In our area we have a steady stream of young lads coming to the front door selling various household goods. Usually I don’t have the patience to listen, but my wife is very good at it. She can give her full attention to someone and they go away blessed as well as having sold something. I really admire that ability in her. I’m too focused on my work or what I want out of

a situation, but it’s people that God is interested in, even down to the last detail (“the very hairs of your head are all numbered”, says Matthew 10:30).

Jesus told this great story to a lawyer who was trying to find out exactly who his neighbour was. Unlike the priest and the Levite who crossed over the road to avoid contact with the unnamed victim of a severe mugging, a Samaritan – the last person the lawyer would have thought would have helped – saw who was in front of him and gave him his full attention, binding his wounds, carrying him to an inn, and paying for his care and board until he returned from his journey.

“Which one of these three do you think was a neighbour to this man?” Jesus asked. “The one who treated him kindly,” the lawyer responded. Jesus said, “Go and do the same”. God has been so kind to me and I’d love for those who come into my world to experience his goodness too.

Through the conversations I’ve had with my hairdresser over the last few years, I’ve found out so much about him. His joys and sorrows, his fears and hopes for the future – and it’s been a privilege to be able to pray about those things in private and then to wait and watch and see how God answers those prayers.

At some point he will probably move on and I’ll have to find another hairdresser, but until then, if my hair sometimes looks a little wonky (as it does at the moment) does it really matter? Hair grows again. But come my next appointment, I’ll be keeping an eye on those scissors. ■

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