

# Park [life]

**MARCH  
2019**

## **YOU ARE WELCOME!**

If you're joining us for one of our services then a special welcome to you!

We hold services in both English and Portuguese and you'll notice similarities and

a few differences in each one. Both involve a mix of singing, prayers, Bible teaching and sharing. We also include an offering which sustains the work of the church and the organisations we support.

Junior Church is held downstairs in the Hall.

Volunteers are DBS checked and will accompany the children downstairs at the appropriate time in the service.

Please join us afterwards for free tea, coffee and biscuits downstairs as we get to know each other better.

## **SPRINGING INTO ACTION...**

Moving into March usually heralds daffodils, (slightly) warmer weather and, this year, the beginning of Lent.

With Easter arriving later than usual, this important season in the Christian calendar doesn't begin until Wednesday 6th March.

Traditionally this has been a time for reflection and preparation in the 40 days before Easter is celebrated. Most commonly Christians have often chosen to 'give up' something; with the purpose being to abstain from something and to use the times of craving or freed space to commit to prayer and reflection. It is a time to be reminded of the journey Jesus makes to the cross and the depth of his sacrifice on calvary. Repentance

is a common theme during this time as we examine our lives in light of the example Christ sets us.

In recent years a trend has started among some Christians to 'pick up' something rather than 'give up'. The '40 Acts' campaign is probably the best known of these, and encourages Christians to reflect the generosity, selflessness and radical love of Jesus for the world.

This involves committing to a generous act every day during lent - from mowing an elderly neighbour's lawn, to paying for the petrol for the person behind you - there is no end to the creativity as we seek to bless our community with the love of Christ during lent.

If you're interested in doing something different this Lent, then feel free to check out the online resources at [40acts.org.uk](http://40acts.org.uk) which include daily devotional readings and ideas.



# RESPONDING TO THE PRODIGAL DAUGHTER



**When a British teenager flees to Syria to join ISIS, should she be allowed back? Is there a Christian response? Peter explores this recent news that draws parallels with an ancient parable.**

The case of Shamima Begum, the 19-year-old Brit who has requested a return to the UK four years after joining terrorist group ISIS, has garnered much media attention.

The overwhelming opinion has been one of disgust, with little sympathy for the mother-of-three, whose first two children have already died. The Home Secretary has already ordered that her citizenship be revoked, in contravention to international law. As I write there has been further controversy as it emerged a shooting range in north-west England had been using Begum's image as a target, following several requests from customers.

A smaller voice has called for her to be returned from the refugee camp where she currently resides, to be tried if appropriate, under the argument that she is "our problem" and therefore our responsibility as a country. This train of thought has even brought together two unlikely political bedfellows, in Jeremy Corbyn and Jacob Rees-Mogg.

As Christians, where should we stand on the matter? It strikes me that there is a biblical precedent that is uncanny in its similarity to this story. The story of the prodigal son told by Jesus in Luke 15 sees a son shame his father by requesting his inheritance so he can go to foreign lands, indulging in parties and fast living.

His return as a broken, desperate man and the loving reaction of his gracious father, alongside the shock and disgust from his brother, make it one of the most powerful parables told by Jesus.

At its heart is the issue of restorative justice - the act of rehabilitation through reconciliation with the victims and the wider community. We see this by the way the son publicly repents before his father. The throwing of a party would also be an opportunity to hold him to account before the community - the prodigal son would be forced to confront all the family he had neglected and shamed, and to seek forgiveness from them in this public setting. Only then could he be reintegrated into his family and the community.

The parallels with Shamima Begum are fairly obvious. How do we rehabilitate a young woman who was still a child when indoctrinated by radical teaching, and married to a man almost twice her age? How do we prevent her newborn son growing up to become another terrorist with a grudge to bear? What precedent does it set when we revoke citizenship because an individual is publicly vilified? (The same measure has not been taken with others who have returned to the UK from Syria, having fought with ISIS.)

Justice is a complicated and often misunderstood word. Yet it features at the very heart of the gospel. The sacrificial actions of Jesus upon the cross broke new ground in the relationship between God and humanity. It enabled reconciliation with a God who we have ignored, rebelled against and failed. As followers of Jesus we are not only reconciled but on a life-long journey of rehabilitation as we seek to become more Christ-like.

The prodigal son is an example of restorative justice; his sins are not ignored, but he is reconciled. What might this look like in the case of Shamima Begum? How might we, as followers of Christ - the provider and enabler of justice - respond to her case?

May we use this opportunity to witness for Jesus in our conversations around this issue, and as Easter approaches, may God speak to us afresh about justice through the eyes of Christ.





## FLIPPIN' PANCAKES EVENT

Love pancakes? Then come on down to church on Tuesday 5th March as we host our second 'Flippin' Pancakes' event to raise money for CAP.

Our young people from ETP will be making pancakes and providing a selection of sweet and savoury toppings. There will be games to play and a donation box for non-CAP clients.

We start at 5.30-7pm and everyone is welcome.

## WHAT'S ON AT PARK

*Want to include something next month? Email: [peter@parkbaptist.church](mailto:peter@parkbaptist.church)*



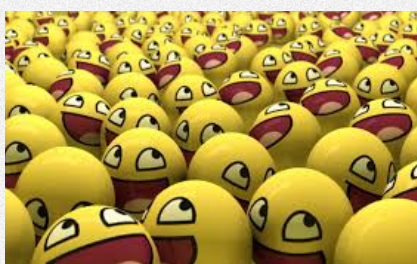
## JOINT PRAYER MEETINGS

We continue to meet together with the Portuguese congregation

for prayer on the **FIRST FRIDAY** of the month at 7pm in the church.

This is an important time for the church as we gather together before God in prayer. If you are a church member in particular, then please prioritise this monthly date in your diaries.

Our next meetings are 1st March & 5th April.



## CHURCH AWAY DAY

We are planning an away day on **Sunday 19th May** with the Portuguese congregation. This will be a time of worship, food, teaching and lots of fun. There will be no Sunday service that day at Park.

Venue TBC, but we will be arranging transport. It is hoped everyone can come, so please make a note in your diaries.



## EASTER EGG HUNT

On Saturday 13th April we will be running an Easter Egg hunt, suitable for the whole family! We are hoping lots of CAP families will attend, so please come along to support and encourage them, even if you wouldn't normally hunt for Easter eggs!

This will be followed by lunch at church.

**SATURDAY 13th APRIL, 10am**



## PETER ANNUAL LEAVE

Please note that Peter and Claire will be on annual leave from 21st March to 1st April.

Please contact Jorge for any emergencies during this time.

Alpha and ETP will continue as normal.





## CONTACT US

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**Park Baptist Church**



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# 10 IDEAS... TO GO DEEPER IN YOUR FAITH

*First shared by Malcolm Edmonds in the Caister House Group.*

1. Identify places in your life in which you need Jesus the most. Humble yourself in the name of Christ by surrendering things that you no longer have control over.
2. Join a Bible study or house group.
3. Acknowledge at least one blessing from God every day.
4. Find a friend or relative who you can talk to about God or scripture to help you through life's problems.
5. Turn to the gospel before anything else.
6. Keep your Bible out, even if you're not reading it every second of the day.
7. Find one scripture that means something to you and memorise it, so you can keep it in mind during times of difficulty.
8. Spend time with the Lord on more days than just Sundays.
9. Find opportunities every day to act as Jesus would.
10. Integrate some Christian songs into your daily playlist: Speak the gospel; sing the gospel. Use songs as a way of lifting you out of times of discontent. Let the words influence your mood.

## SUNDAYS AT PARK...

### MARCH

**SUNDAY 3rd** Rev. Daniel Pritchard (*JPUH Chaplain*)

**SUNDAY 10th** First Sunday of Lent

**SUNDAY 17th** Second Sunday of Lent (**Communion**)

**SUNDAY 24th** Third Sunday of Lent

**SUNDAY 31st** Fourth Sunday of Lent