

### A Divine Appointment at 7-Eleven

Beth Rose

As I left home for the morning commute, I noticed the gas gauge in the van was well below a quarter tank. Making a mental note to stop at the gas station to fill up, I began heading out to work. On the way, I guess I went on auto-pilot; no matter what happened, God intervened. Driving right past the gas station just outside the neighborhood, I completely forgot about filling up until I'd already driven past a second gas station. The very next station on my route was not my favorite. Nevertheless, I needed gas and soon. The last time I stopped at this particular location, the van's ignition would not start and I needed to borrow jumper cables from someone to get it going again. Despite this memory, I pulled into the 7-Eleven on Old Concord Road and prayed that history would not repeat itself.

Driving into the gas pump area, there was a gold car stopped at a pump. The rear driver's side tire was completely flat. I looked inside to see if the driver was in the vehicle, but didn't see anyone. On the opposite side of the pump from the flat tire was a man pumping gas into his white SUV. I tried to catch his eye to ask if he knew anything about the flat tire. He would not look at me. Shortly after I began pumping gas, a very flustered woman came out of the 7-Eleven straight to the car. She was talking on her phone. I kept trying to catch her attention. Once she noticed my attention to her, she said, "These people are trying to make me late to work!" She was fully aware of her flat tire and explained she planned to fill the tire with air, hoping it would last until she got to work. Her attempts to contact help over the phone weren't getting her the results she needed this morning.

After that statement, she went back into the store before I could explain that her plan wouldn't get her very far. Continuing to pump gas, I prayed for this woman and her plight. As I watched the men and women enter and exit the gas station and 7-Eleven store, God burdened my heart for the apathy going on around me.

Nobody else was paying any attention to this distraught woman. As a woman myself, all I could think was, "Why is nobody helping her? Does anybody else notice her? She's obviously in need of assistance!" Fortunately, I come from a long line of practical women. God reminded me that in my student driver days the first thing my mother taught me to do was change a tire. I looked down at my outfit of the day—a Great Commission Center polo shirt and my favorite jeans. While staring at the "Great Commission Center" embroidery on my shirt, I heard God prompting me to change this lady's tire. "Be her neighbor," I heard clearly in my heart.

Ok, let's do this! I pull away from the pump into a parking spot in front of the store. As she walks out the door, I ask her if she has a spare tire. "Yes," she tells me, "but I don't know how to change a tire!" I replied, "Well, you're in luck, Ma'am, because I do!" I get her jack and tire iron out, and get to work replacing her flat with the spare tire from her trunk. During this time, I'm talking to her, explaining that this must have been a divine appointment. We exchange names and pleasantries. As I share God's love with her, she shares Him with me and we talk about how good He is to bring us sisters in Christ together this morning.

During this sweet time, my heart is again burdened that not a single other person stopped to ask if either of us ladies needed assistance. Not a one! Men and women are walking out of the store, pulling up to the gas pumps, and then driving off in their cars, paying no heed to the plight of two women changing a flat tire. As I'm noticing this complete disconnect from humanity around me, all I can think is how we've created a culture of apathy. We expect modern conveniences to replace human interactions. She could have called AAA and waited for them to come change her tire. A simple 15-minute human interaction allowed her to be on her way instead of stuck at the gas station waiting for the modern convenience to arrive within the hour.

These neighbors of ours need us now more than ever to interact with them face-to-face. Her grateful smile as she drove off to her destination this morning was a blessing I won't soon forget.

So, who are our neighbors, and what are we going to do about it?

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*Beth Rose is our Ministry Assistant at MBA. We're glad she shared her neighbor story with us!*

