

I'M COMING HOME, MOM

by Brian Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

You walk in the door like you did during all those years as a minor, but this time you're home because there's nowhere else to live. You thought that you had severed the umbilical cord with your parents, but when you lost your job and subsequently your apartment it was either moving back home or living under a bridge.

The economic recession has recently changed the face of family structures in many countries. You breathed a sigh of relief as you waved goodbye to your adult child leaving to make their place in life and asserting their independence. You even helped them furnish their apartment and were so proud that you had raised your child to be a fine young adult who would do well in life.

Not only are children coming back home to live but we are seeing relatives moving in with their kin because their marriage has broken under the financial and emotional strains. Job losses have resulted in home foreclosures and the occupants sometimes can't even afford to lease an apartment.

"Where am I going to live with three children? Who would be prepared to take us in? I know. My parents won't turn me down. I'll just move back in."

Of course we will take in our offspring however old they are, especially if it is the result of our country's economic situation rather than poor choices on their part. It is essential if you find yourself in this situation to love your family unconditionally. This doesn't give them carte blanche to come in and take over. It is important before any family members take up residence in your home to have a meeting to discuss issues such as a possible time frame. There needs to be agreement on sharing responsibilities and chores, working out how the new entrants can help contribute to the added costs incurred, schooling for the children, privacy issues and how any tensions can be addressed. Just because they are family doesn't mean that they are entitled to any special favors in your home. This has probably not happened to you before.

The Bible says that we are worse than unbelievers if we don't provide for our families. I know we would bend our desires to meet their needs for a defined period. If there is no attempt by the adults to try to find work, or if they are not actively setting goals and working towards their fulfillment you may need to have some serious discussions and redefine the time line of their stay. The family that has moved in is already stressed out to the max. You are stressed because you as empty nesters now have to reinvent yourselves and don't have the freedom or privacy you had been enjoying.

I went to a training session today on homeless families and the responsibility that schools have towards them in this difficult age. The law now makes it mandatory to give homeless families special rights, food, clothing and counseling. Last school year I saw many more grandchildren moving in with their grandparents, families living in motels/hotels, and some living in vehicles. This is all part of homelessness and it is sad when folks do not have kin or great friends that could give them a break and offer some hospitality.

Many parents have fallen victim to the housing crisis, to financial scams or to marriage problems and find themselves unable to cope without some intervention by relatives. In all these situations we need to lavish special care, love and attention on the ones who suffer the most...our children. Consider taking in a family for a set time if you have the facilities in your home to do so. Most of all, pray for the millions across our nation who find themselves in the unenviable situation of having to lower their pride and ask for help to get through this very difficult period in their lives.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.