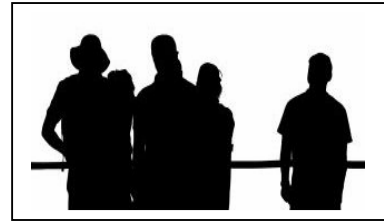


Desperately Seeking Lodgers

A short story about church evangelism



“We need more lodgers,” said Susan Silversmith to her husband Geoff one evening. Ten years back, they had bought their large rambling house to accommodate six children as well as two elderly relatives. With only the two younger children now left at home, the house seemed achingly empty, even with the presence of Tim their lodger, who had become like one of the family. “Let’s make a webpage, then people looking for lodgings can easily find us,” suggested Geoff.

Their family home was an ideal place for lodgers. They were easy-going and welcoming people. Susan was a caring woman who could be motherly to student-age lodgers or a wise friend to anyone nearer her own age. Geoff liked the extra company and was a gracious host, while Sharon and James (10 and 14) already treated (or boisterously mistreated) Tim as an older brother. Indeed, Tim’s stay with them had been a healing time for him in many ways. Of course, as in any family, there were grumpy times but these usually evaporated quickly.

“Let’s sit down after dinner and list what to put on the webpage,” announced Geoff the next day. There were so many things they might have said. How Geoff loved fishing and motorbikes. That Susan was a music teacher and played in a band. The way Sharon and James played a mean game of tennis. Even how Tim their lodger had found healing and acceptance in the Silversmith household.

But somehow, despite their gifts and interests, the Silversmiths found it hard to communicate when not face-to-face. So their webpage ended up looking rather like this:

- * one photo of the front of the house (no people pictured at all)
- * measurements of the rooms available for lodgers, with details of the decor and furniture
- * a list of house-rules and meal-times
- * a short history about the building of the house, and of their town

And that was it. The Silversmiths could never understand why “the website didn’t work”.

This 328-word short story can be freely reproduced in print media. It is, of course, intended to illustrate the importance of church websites being personal and people-based: a shop-window into a real family rather than a building with meetings.

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