

WHEN MAMA STAYS HOME

Those of us who arrived on this planet by 1940 remember a style of home life as different from our 2020 lifestyle as Mars is from Venus.

When I was a kid, in all but a few houses on every block in our little town, mama was at home with her brood. Although WW II forced women to replace our previously male work force, when the soldiers came home, most of their wives became full-time homemakers again.

If you were around back then, you know at least part of the reasons why both parents in a home didn't need a job. Since only one mate worked, most families really needed just one car. That saved dollars. Only the richest folks in our town had huge houses back then, and the mansions they did have were smaller than many of our regular homes today. Factor that into one-paycheck family budgets. And most of us back then lived simple lives on Depression-learned budgets, so we got along quite well without double incomes. Little did I realize when I was growing up how fortunate we were to have our mother at home to organize our world.

Thanks to the coronavirus restrictions, offices across the land are closed now and millions of mams (and daddies) are at home with their kids. One colleague in a usually busy metro area emailed me today, "I am currently sitting next to my soon-to-be two-year-old as she watches Mickey Mouse racers," he wrote to me. And he went on to tell me that his talented wife, a school counselor who would usually be at work, was conferencing with her co-workers while sitting on her bed. Their older kids had turned their den into a PE gym and a makeshift band hall. Thanks to the virus, their little family are enjoying life together today, a lot like we used to.

I'm glad my wife and I live in a fine home. I'm glad we have quality vehicles to drive (two of them still, although my retirement makes one of them unnecessary). I am addicted to my cell phone and cable TV and all the other expensive tech gadgets unheard of back in 1940. So, I'm not ready to go back to a one-income lifestyle. But I do hope that this brief retreat to a more affordable existence when families can actually live together in our homes may help us to hear Jesus when he warns us that life does not consist in the abundance of our possession.

Only by downsizing their budgets will American families be able to enjoy quality time together in their home again.