

## **WE'RE GOING HOME NOW**

This is a confused time for me. I've been officially retired now for just over three months. Now I can sleep late, mope around the house, and dress like a bum. My 60-hour work week now looks more like a 6-hour gig. I go to my church office just two or three times a week, and then only because I volunteered to tackle certain weekly tasks until our new pastor gets on board.

What I'm saying is that I'm not out tending to pastoral duties from before dawn until way past dark, as I did for sixty-plus years. Now I'm at home most of the time, and I'm still trying to decide what I ought to be doing with all these idle hours. Eventually, I'm sure, I'll get entrenched in some routine, but right now I'm somewhat at loose ends.

What makes all of this even more confusing for me, however, is the way the virus epidemic has re-described life in most neighborhoods. Because virus curbs have shut down non-essential businesses, and because our schools are closed, and because so many folks are being forced to work from their homes, or—like my dentist neighbor—not to work at all, I'm not the only person staying at home all day. I'm not the only guy whose car never leaves the driveway. I'm not the only resident swigging coffee while vegging out on my front-porch swing.

Staying at home suddenly is the new norm. Right when I saw myself as an odd duck because I was domociled, a host of my younger neighbors are just like me. They're at home all day every day. And, thanks to the virus crisis, many of them are having to learn how to coexist peacefully and productively with a house full of school kids who have no school to go to. When I watch them, I realize that my new assignment may be the easiest one on our block. All I have to do is say, "Yes, dear," when my lady beckons.

Without doubt, this virus epidemic has remodeled life as we knew it, and not all the changes have made it better. But being forced to rediscover quality time at home surely will bless most of us. When God ushered his people into the promised land, he told them to be sure their offspring were familiar with his words. "You shall teach them diligently to your children and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up," he told them. Home was to be the root of their faith.

I like the Pooh cartoon that showed up right when virus regulations began. Pooh tells Piglet, "We're going home now, because that's the best thing to do." Right on, Pooh.