

## Being a family

### Growing closer as a family during lockdown



The thing that has most surprised me during lockdown is the gift of being able to spend quality time with my three adult children, to get to know them and to restore relationships. Previously, we had very much lived separate lives, passing like ships in the night and rarely eating together. It was more like having lodgers and I felt sad that I had lost touch with them and the lives they were living. Then, during lockdown, after a difficult first week, I discovered that, unlike me, they did not complain about things, they got along really well together, were very positive and good listeners, with a very strong loyalty to the family and their friends. In a charitable way, they also felt able to share what they found difficult in the way that I sometimes spoke to them and corrected them. One of them suggested we have a weekly family games night and this proved great fun except that I felt a sadness that one of them chose not to join us, saying it wasn't his sort of thing, although when they were children, we had always played games. I left him free not to join us two weeks running and then, one day when I was sorting our box of home videos taken when our four children were young, it suddenly occurred to me that this was something which might interest this son. Sure enough, instead of the games night that week, he was happy to join our home video night. It was such a gift to my husband and me when this prompted the children to talk about how much they appreciated their upbringing, instead of the confrontation and criticism which has tended to happen in more recent years. Following that, we had a take-away night together and I have tried to think of joint activities which would suit all the different personalities in our family. I thank God for the sharing and healing in our family in these days and for the chance to appreciate my children in a new way.

### Giving confidence



He was a man in his 40s, a bit sad, good: dirty, shabby clothes smelling of alcohol and nicotine... But he didn't ask me for money, just work, any job. He clearly needed help. What would Jesus have done in my place? I decided to invite him to my house, where I needed some repairs. He had told me that he just got out of prison and had expenses while on probation, but he had nothing. His wife had left him, too. He did the job I asked him to do, which I paid for. Before taking him back to where he was spending the night, he asked me if I had any other work. After we talked to some friends, we found other things for him to do. He came back several times, and our mutual trust and respect grew. After about a month or so, he never showed up. I was afraid he had ended up back in prison. Then one day he called me on my mobile. "Thank you for everything you've done for me, for the trust you've given me. I was able to pay my probation and buy a phone. Now I have a steady job. I'm very happy!"