

Carole (not her real name) came down and showed us up to her small 2 bedroom apartment. As we walked by the bedroom doors and into the living room, we noticed that all the doors had holes in them which made them look like they had been hit with a hammer. As we started to talk, Carole told us that she was a domestic violence victim survivor. When we asked about her situation and whether or not she was getting any child support she revealed that the father of two of her 3 children had been put in prison for the incident in which he had punched out those doors trying to break through and reach her. She had ended up in hospital.

As we talked more, we noticed that there were 4 children not 3 and asked about that. Carole told us that the other child belonged to a friend of hers that had been staying with her for a few months. We asked if the friend was helping out with the bills; she replied that her friend had 3 children under the age of 6 and like her, had been unable to find work because she lacked the necessary skills. As we looked around, we began to understand why the apartment looked so wrecked. It was home to two single Moms with a total of 6 young children. Thinking about her situation it seemed obvious to us that a lot of Carole's stress and financial problems would be eased if her friend could find her own apartment; wasn't it time to ask her friend to move on...

Then she said, "I can't ask her to do that. You see my friend and her children were homeless and living in her car. I had to do something and help her out in some way and the only thing I have is a roof over my head so the least I could do was share that with her."

Clearly we were not making any headway and so we changed the subject. As we started to leave Carole asked if we could accept a donation of children's clothes. She had a ton of baby clothes that she wanted to donate. "I'm a great believer in giving back" she said.

At the time both of us were thinking strictly logically and as is often the case during home visits, there was a lot of "static"; the children were watching TV which was on loud and soon after we arrived they began to squabble so it was hard to concentrate on what we were being told. That night I woke up with the words "the Widow's mite" repeating over and over in my mind. As I thought back on our day, I could not get this apparently routine call out of my mind and then her words came back to me "the only thing I have is a roof over my head so the least I could do was share that with her."

Then I realized why I had been awakened. Jesus wanted to make sure that this all-too-human child of His saw the beautiful example of giving that He had prepared for me. What He was telling me is that Carole was willing to share the only gift she had – the roof over her head. The spiritual difference chasm between me & Carole was huge. In my comfortable middle class world, having roof over your head is a given, an unquestioned assumption. How many of us whom God has blessed so richly would see their house/home as a gift? Would be willing to share it indefinitely with another family? Uncomfortable questions.

To Carole, it was one of the few gifts she had been given and so, without counting the cost, she shared it.