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Illness and unemployment

A verbatim from Hungary

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The pastor makes an appointment with Family X., since he wants to get to know all the parishioners of his parish. From his information he knows that the husband (M) and his Wife (F) are about 40 years of age, the couple having two children, aged 10 and 12. When the pastor arrives at their house he realizes that both adults are at home. Soon after saying 'hello' the conversation starts like this:

- M. 1: It is nice that you came for a visit. We had a good contact to your predecessor, too. Specially, when I was in hospital and in the following time he used to come and visit.
- F. 1: Oh yes, during that time he was here almost every week.
- P. 1: If I got it right, then you were sick and are on the way of convalescence now.
- M. 2: I have some heart-problems, and I still have to be away sick. I should have surgery, but at the moment the doctors won't dare this. Now I got a new medication.
- F. 2: I am very strained how it will work. Sometimes it helps, sometimes not. Often he is really sick. He then even doesn't have the strength to ride a bicycle.
- P. 2: You must have gone through a lot during this disease, isn't it?
- M. 3: Yes, that's what it is. The doctors first checked on my nerves. They told me: "you overexcite too much!" But I knew that it was something else. And then I got this heart attack.
- F. 3: Partially the doctors were right!
- P. 3: You were worrying about all this a lot, did you?
- M. 4: Yes, and it started much earlier, - when my mother celebrated her birthday. Just then they told me that I was laid off.
- F. 4: I remember the moment you came home. The way you looked, really scared me. Just said a few words: I got fired, too.
- P. 4: That was a striking blow.

- M. 5: Almost for 20 years I had been working with this company, almost 20 years. At first the company was performing well, but then the trouble started. I told the leading officers, that we did not perform well enough.
- F. 5: One could tell from the payments, too.
- M. 6: I predicted the troubles – I was a member of the leading staff for 4 years. We spent too much money on just luxurious representation, buying expensive cars for the executives and so on... And then this memorable day came on, when I was laid off...
- P. 5: I can see how much all this is still upsetting you once you start thinking of it.
- M. 5: And I have to think of it all the time. How often did I tell that it cannot go on this way! Since then my doctor keeps reminding me to take care of my heart. I also have to watch out for my emotions, otherwise something worse might happen. See, again I started talking about it. It is not so easy to get over it.
- P. 6: Perhaps it helps when we talk about it.
- F. 6: He always thinks that everybody is looking at him. People ask us “How do you do?” – and we cannot really answer, besides “fine”.
- M. 8: It is like people are avoiding me. But after the surgery I will face them more courageously again and talk to them. – But first the surgery!
- P. 7: You are put to the touch hardly, isn’t it?
- M. 9: Yes, sometimes I have a very bad feeling. But if he up there requires me, then I am not afraid.
- P. 8: I don’t know whether it’s right what you say. Since you have a family, too.
- M. 10: Yes, imagining to leave my wife and my children behind, that scares me. We are so young, still. Even the children. We had to wait for the first baby for such a long time... and now comes the surgery...
- P. 9: Do you think that you will be able to work again after that?
- M. 11: I don’t know, perhaps in a part-time-job... right now my wife is working.
- P. 10: And here at home, is everything all right?
- F. 7: Well, it has to, doesn’t it? I work only for half a day.
- M. 12: Yes, my salary dropped by 25% since my disease started. Intentionally or unintentionally, it is a matter of fact now. Either your heart or unemployment. Yet for the children it would be good to be able to attend school for some more time.
- F. 8: Sitting at home all day long, that matters, too. In former times I took care of a lot of things – now he has to do that.
- P. 11: Surely, that must be hard.
- M. 13: A while ago one member of our presbytery asked me, whether I would put the blame on God for all this. No, no, it’s men who cause things like this – they act and they are causing it. That is the risk in a life full of race.

P. 12: I got the feeling, that you feel to be at life's mercy, don't you? I have the same feeling, too. But it is good, if the two of you can stick it out together. I will come back soon to see you again.