

Solidarity in the village – are we losing something valuable?

by Stephan Laube, local councillor in Felben-Wellhausen (TG)

Many of us still remember it: in the village, help was taken for granted. Anyone coming home late from work knew their children could have a meal at a neighbour's. People would lend each other ladders, tools or cars, without a receipt and without discussion. If someone fell ill or there was a death in the family, a handful of people would turn up at the door – with some soup, time and a listening ear.

“One for all, all for one” was not just a saying, but everyday life. Today, this sometimes feels like a memory from a fading era. We are more mobile, busier, and we organise much of life professionally: delivery services instead of shopping rounds, childcare instead of neighbourhood help, chat groups instead of spontaneous encounters. At the same time, reserve is growing:

“I don't want to be a burden to anyone.” Or: “I don't want to impose myself.” This creates a silent distance, even though we actually live closer together than ever before.

Has solidarity been lost? Perhaps not – but it needs space again. Solidarity starts small: a quick chat over the garden fence, a phone call to the neighbour living alone, an offer to do the shopping once a week, a lift when the car is in the garage.

And it thrives on mutual obligation: those who accept help should also be able to offer help later. A village only remains a village if we are more than just addresses.

The good news is that solidarity cannot be ordered – but it can be practised. Every day.

(Translation Swiss Standpoint)