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Too Many Visitors?

by Lesley Dawson

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. We had been together for a month. My father had been visiting from England. It had been a great visit, travelling in the Galilee. Now he was flying home. We were on our way to the airport. We walked expectantly up to the check-in desk in plenty of time for the flight. The look on the face of the check-in clerk clouded as she examined the ticket and she sighed, “you have missed the flight. It took off an hour ago”

“How come? The time of take off is on this ticket.”

“There was a change of plan. We notified everyone on the flight.”

Eventually she admitted that they hadn’t called my house in Bethlehem and was persuaded to book my father on the next day’s flight.

My dad turned to me, “what do we do now?”

I wasn’t quite sure but knew that my friend Jackie would know what to do. Sitting in her kitchen, drinking Turkish coffee she made a hotel reservation for Dad at a comfortable hotel on the Tel Aviv seafront.

“You will like it. It is where my mum and dad stay when they come to visit.”

Having deposited him there and arranging for Jackie’s daughter to take him for dinner I took stock of my next task.

I was saying goodbye to dad and within a few hours was welcoming two friends for a trip to the Dead Sea. I had it all worked out but hadn’t banked on this.

Within a few hours I was back at Ben Gurion, this time in the arrivals hall. Packing their luggage into my car I tried to explain my dilemma. I would drive them to Bethlehem and leave them there. We could eat dinner at the kebab house up the hill from my apartment and I would head off back to Tel Aviv next morning. Not a good start to a holiday, but the best I could do.

All worked according to plan, my father had enjoyed his dinner with Dina and this morning had walked along the beach. This time we were on time for his flight. I said goodbye and hugged him before driving back to Bethlehem. My guests had spent a happy morning walking to Manger Square and exploring the Church of the Nativity. It had been the worst of times, but eventually turned out to be the best of times.