

FAMILY REUNION INSTITUTE'S

STICKY REUNION SITUATION

CHARGING FOR THE HOLIDAY DINNER

November 2017

The Situation:

This is a SRS because our family considers our holiday dinners to be a sort of reunion. My aunt who is the best cook in the family and a fantastic host, has been holding the holiday dinners at her home for years. My mom and their other three siblings usually pitch in to pay for the meal and all the trimmings. This year however, my aunt wants to charge everyone who comes \$25. *Who charges their family for the holiday dinner?*

My aunt says that a lot of families are doing this now, and she doesn't think it's fair that she and her siblings have to pay for dinner for 30 people. She is ruining the spirit of the holiday and our reunion. What should we do?

The Fix:



**Sylvia
Ford-George**

What should you do? If you want to eat, you'll give your Aunt \$25.

Sometimes those of us on the receiving end of a great holiday meal have no idea the cost—literally and through blood, sweat and tears (...*hey, you try cutting up the onions*), as well as the shopping, cooking, cleaning, dressing up the house, etc. Too often the family cook gets tired and retires herself. Your aunt's not doing that...*yet*. She is just asking for help. To make things easier for her, family members who enjoy her food and hospitality should put their money together early November, deliver it to her with some flowers, and offer to assist. That way she won't have to ask, folks won't have hurt feelings, and everyone can have a great family dinner just as you've done for years.

The Fix:



Doug Harris

This situation reminds me of my own family--but in a different way. For years my aunts and uncles took care of all the food for our family reunions. Our aunts would spend days making potato salad, cooking greens, string beans and mac & cheese + an array of desserts. Our uncles would handle multiple grills and fry fish in huge vats. Everyone had a choice of their favorites, and a good time was had by all. Then that generation grew old. None of them wanted to sweat over hot stoves and grills anymore, and my generation was not ready to step up to the plate. Then we started meeting at hotels and paying not only for lodging, but for food. The "freeloaders" stayed home. I am sharing all this to say that your family has reached the same crossroads as mine. The older generation is tired; many probably on fixed incomes. Why hasn't someone said, "We'll pay for all the food" or "You relax; we'll bring all the food and set up everything?" It's time for a changing of the guard, and for young people to step up to the plate. It's only fair.
