

We faced obstacle after obstacle. Those who worked did so begrudgingly, and many would offer excuse after excuse not to work. Here are some examples.

- The young unmarried men—those who were strongest and who had the most time and the greatest ability to produce—resented that they were, in effect, being made to work for other men's wives and children, without any additional compensation.*
- Whether strong or weak, everyone working, whether he did much or little, would wind up with the same amount of food and other resources. If an individual worked a full eight hours in a day, and another worked only two, each received the same. Those carrying the greater load strongly believed this to be an extreme injustice. Can you blame them?*
- Experience counted for nothing; the older men felt disrespected by those who were younger.*
- Under the communal arrangement, the wives had to cook and do laundry for anyone and everyone—not just their own husbands and families. This angered husbands, who, along with their wives, felt this was a form of slavery.*

All of this was bad enough, but I'm convinced it would have been a lot worse if we hated each other. No one in our congregation was perfect—not by a long shot. Still, we were a people who had common goals and who sincerely wanted everyone among us to have the best. Our company had more than its share of honest and decent men and women.

Sharing resources sounds so compassionate and compelling. It has great emotional appeal. Operating this way, however, set us at one another's throats. It bred resentment, disrespect, ill will, selfishness, envy, and greed. It was a dead end that would have killed us all.

*paraphrased from William Bradford,
Governor of the Plymouth Colony*