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God's Best Way is through Inner-Circle Biblical Relationships

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Raising a Family

# Caring for Elderly Parents and Grandparents

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1. **Serve God as a whole family in helping older relatives.** The apostle Paul said it quite strongly: "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8). (See *Serve God Together* at [ChristiansTogether.org](http://ChristiansTogether.org))
2. **Forgive quickly when parents do or say something** that hurts your feelings or reminds you of past abuse. Do not require apologies very often. Worship God by being like Jesus, who forgave all your past sins when you came to Him. (See *Forgive One Another Without Being Asked* at [ChristiansTogether.org](http://ChristiansTogether.org))
3. **Even when it's hard, speak up truthfully** in your most helpful fashion when your elderly parent, grandparent or relative needs to deal with some issue, whether concerning health, finances or something else. You may need more help from the church. Sometimes you can get good support in bringing in other close Christian friends and relatives to help get the truth across. (See *Speak to One Another Truthfully and Helpfully* at [ChristiansTogether.org](http://ChristiansTogether.org))
4. **When necessary, share your living quarters** with an elderly parent or grandparent. God shares His whole world with us. (And, it was much better

without us.) So bringing your relative(s) into your home to live is true worship that reflects back to God His very own character. (See *Share with One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

5. **Place courage into your parent or grandparent** to face their toughest challenges. Things that were easier with younger bodies may call for encouragement now. Adapting to this phase of life also requires courage. Dealing with growing loneliness may need solutions requiring more courageous action. (See *Encourage One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

6. **Grow in biblical love by denying yourselves** as a family when necessary for the basic needs of elderly parents and grandparents. Life is about more than pleasure. Question your activities and possessions in light of the need of others. (See *Love One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

7. **Grow more and more tolerant of any troublesome behavior** of elderly relatives, accepting most of it as the result of growing older with brand-new and baffling challenges. Do what you can to help your elderly parents and grandparents make healthy adjustments, but do not withhold acceptance of them because of their deteriorating health and mental abilities. (See *Accept One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

8. **Overlook objectionable comments and behaviors** of your elderly parents and grandparents. View this as worship wherein you act like God himself, who overlooks our objectionable comments and behaviors far more often. After all, life is completely about becoming more and more like Jesus Christ. (See *Bear with One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

9. **When possible — when it does not negatively affect you** or others much — do things the way that is comfortable for your elderly parents and grandparents. As life gets more challenging at the basic health and survival level and as mental capabilities degenerate, your elderly relatives will be more confused and prefer the way they have always done things. This does not mean changing the way you do most things. Politely ignore their demands that you live your life their way, but still allow them to live their life their way as much as possible. (See *Submit to One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

10. **Allow your elderly parents and grandparents to serve you** and your family, as you serve them. They, too, especially if they are Christians, are asked to

contribute in love to others. (See *Serve One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

11. **Avoid arguments by not making big issues out of small things**, openly declaring that people do things differently and both ways seem acceptable. Do not overly force your will on your elderly parents and grandparents. Remember that life is getting more difficult and confusing for them. And, with their diminishing mental capabilities, however slight, understanding your points of view may be very hard. Arguing will only make things worse. (See *Live Together in Peace* at ChristiansTogether.org)

12. **Enjoy the privilege of imitating God** by showing much mercy and compassion to your elderly parents and grandparents. This is great worship because it is costly. It is a powerful expression of your love for God. Your elderly relatives have many needs they just cannot meet themselves. (See *Show Mercy and Be Compassionate* at ChristiansTogether.org)

13. **Include, at least occasionally, your elderly relatives in family activities.** They have diminishing social opportunities. Involvement with their family is, perhaps, more important than ever. (See *Be Hospitable with One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

14. **Honor the age of your elderly parents and grandparents.** Birthdays are particularly important in that each most likely represents getting through a difficult year — and facing an even more difficult one. Also celebrate any noticeable changes in their becoming more like Jesus rather than just believing that they are too old to change. (See *Honor One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

15. **When possible and needed, recommend your elderly relative** as a source of wisdom collected through many years of life. The School of Hard Knocks has taught many lessons that others might need in order to avoid having to learn the hard way. (See *Commend One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

16. **Regularly suggest things your elderly parent or grandparent can do** for others. Keeping active and feeling useful are major challenges later in life. Lack of social interaction will prevent him or her from knowing of possibilities to be lovingly useful and do good in God's Name. (See *Spur One Another on to Love and Good Deeds* at ChristiansTogether.org)

17. **Empathize with your elderly relative who is in pain**, poor health or grief.

There must be great worth in standing by someone when you cannot do anything. God stands by us even when He could do something but knows there is more to be achieved by just being with us. (See *Hurt with One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

**18. Do what you can, within reason, to make your elderly relative as comfortable** as possible while he or she faces illness, pain, grief, loss, even death. It is so easy to find comfort in the hope of a more active future with increasing opportunities, more financial security, and more career or personal advances. Elderly people have none of these things to look forward to, and they can become quite distressed. The greatest comfort can be given by helping them to grasp salvation in Christ and the marvelous heaven that awaits. [Read the book *Heaven* by Randy Alcorn.] (See *Comfort One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

**19. Pick up the pieces whenever your elderly parent or grandparent makes a mess** of things. We all make mistakes and need others to help pay the consequences. Sometimes that means restoring personal relationships damaged by insensitivity. Sometimes it means paying for medications because the only available money was given to the little boy down the street. And sometimes failing health creates embarrassing problems. (See *Carry One Another's Burdens* at ChristiansTogether.org)

**20. Evaluate carefully the faith of your elderly relatives.** On the one hand, if they do not have eternal life in Jesus, death could end their opportunity for saving faith. On the other hand, contemporary Christianity might not have prepared them for the transition from this life to everlasting life through sickness, inconvenience, pain and suffering. It is best to spot superficial faith in the early senior years, leaving a lot of time to bolster biblical belief until death is something to look forward to and welcome. (See *Examine One Another's Faith* at ChristiansTogether.org)

**21. Teach one another the essentials of life.** Your elderly parent or grandparent can teach your family members what they have learned, and you can teach them about their forward journey. They may need to be taught about better health care, being more careful to avoid accidents, and the glories of heaven. (Read the book *Heaven* by Randy Alcorn.) Remember that elderly people do not want to feel as though they are being treated like children. By requesting more information from them out of their many years of experience, you are making it more possible for them to be taught by you. (See *Teach One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

22. **Help a live-in elderly relative take charge** of an appropriate in-home family responsibility. Elderly relatives who do not live with your family can still play a part in contributing to the family, as shown through these various family applications of the Togethers. There is so much to do. Each elderly relative can make a significant contribution to the success of the family and its members. And don't forget that they have a lot of time to pray. Keep them informed of specific prayer needs. (Read *See That Each One Does His or Her Part* at ChristiansTogether.org)

23. **Include your elderly relatives in a family project to bless others.** They will love being useful to the larger world. A great example would be the shoe box ministry of Samaritan's Purse. (See *Be Salt Together in a Bland, Tasteless World* at ChristiansTogether.org)

24. **Never let an elderly relative face evil alone.** Satan has many ways of attacking seniors. Be on the watch for those who want to take advantage of older people. Someone may be after their money and will even appear as an "angel of light" to weasel their way in. Ask your elderly parent(s) or grandparent(s) to let you check out anyone or any organization before they give away money over a certain amount. (See *Stand Up to the Devil at One Another's Side* at ChristiansTogether.org)

25. **Die to some of your assets, possibilities, activities and dreams** if necessary for the basic needs of your elderly parent or grandparent. God "paid forward" for this kind of dying to self. He sent His only begotten Son to die so that we might live. In letting a parent or grandparent live with you, you may have to die in some very cherished ways. To compensate, become more familiar with what you have already gained in Jesus Christ. And then go on to astonish yourself with the little we know about what marvels await us in heaven. (See *Die for One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

26. **Let your elderly Christian parents know you value their prayers,** and give them specifics to pray for every family member. Also, make sure the family prays for them to endure with grace. This praying for one another is the unseen foundation that lies behind success in both living and dying. (See *Pray for One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

27. **Never abandon an elderly relative completely.** This requirement to be available in practical ways until death can be met by a few family members who

represent the family as a whole. Some family members may not be able to do this, but the family as a whole can give it a good try. Help Christian parents and grandparents remember that God will take them home in His time and promises to be with them all the way. (See *Run the Full Race Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

28. **Help your elderly relatives preserve their hope in Christ** all the way to death. Sometimes the difficulties of growing old and the pain of dying make it hard to keep believing strongly in God's goodness. The family can do much to remind an elderly parent or grandparent that their hope is not in this world but in the next. Help him or her stay focused on hope in Jesus. (See *Preserve One Another's Hope* at ChristiansTogether.org)

29. **Do not judge your parents for past hurtful issues** or mistreat them with unresolved anger. Instead of provoking them to anger, forgive them and move on so you can truly love with Jesus' love. (See *Forbid Mistreatment of One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

30. **Do not covet your elderly parents' or grandparents' economic resources.** Help them protect their money and do everything you can to not become dependent on them financially. Instead, help them use their money wisely for their own necessary care. Help them to see that it is their responsibility to alleviate your concerns by paying for help they can afford. (See *Keep One Another from the Love of Money* at ChristiansTogether.org)



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