



Becoming the Parent of Your Parents



If blessed with long life, there is a strong likelihood you will come to a point when your parents need some sort of care. This could range from complete nursing home care to occasional assistance. Generally, it will be somewhere in between.

It is not uncommon for aging parents to need loving boundaries and even some careful correction in some areas. Perhaps their driving needs to be restricted in some situations or maybe they need other cautions for their own safety and for others as well.

Here are some points to consider:

- 1. Honor your parents.** This command of God has no expiration date. Even when we may need to take the role of “parent” we still show respect to our parents.
- 2. Confer with your siblings (if you have them).** As with any parental role, provide a unified front and work together. Talk it over with them and get everyone on the same page as to what the problems may be and what option you have.
- 3. Remind your parents of how they taught you.** They may become negative or critical and need to be reminded to think positively or refrain from negative behavior. Most likely they taught you these proper behaviors and your gentle reminders may curb these tendencies.
- 4. Care enough to take the risk.** It is not fun, but you are most likely the person with the best relationship with them to provide the help they need at this time.
- 5. Protect them in love.** They made sacrifices for you and now they are the ones who need someone to watch out for them.
- 6. Realize you are teaching your children how to treat you in your old age.** Your children will model your example. Share what you are going through with your children and remind them of the need to be respectful and honoring even when they may do things that are embarrassing.



- 7. Maintain contact.** Visit or call as frequently as possible. Regular contact will help identify changes in mental or physical abilities.
- 8. Help them finish well.** Be open with them and call to their attention what you and others may be observing where they may need help.

God designed the family and instructed us to care for the members of the family. When their needs become greater than we can manage on our own, we recruit outside resources. But we are the first-responders. With God's help we can care for our parents as they cared for us.