

# 10 TIPS FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS



Seek support from other caregivers. You are not alone!



Take care of your own health so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.



Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.



Learn how to communicate effectively with doctors.

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Be open to new technologies that can help you care for your loved one.



Watch out for signs of depression and don't delay getting professional help when you need it.



Caregiving is hard work so take respite breaks often.

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Organize medical information so it's up to date and easy to find.



Make sure legal documents are in order.



Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is!

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**Prayer:** Thank you for trusting me with the precious role of caring for another. Help me to extend your love to all that I touch.

## Caring for the Caregiver

November is National Family Caregivers Month – a time to recognize and honor family caregivers across the nation. The commemoration provides the opportunity to raise awareness of family caregiver issues, celebrate their efforts, and increase support for them.

Congregations can play a role in supporting family caregivers. According to a recent study, “Called to Care: Honoring Elders & the Family Care Journey,” congregations can provide a volunteer support network for care recipients and caregivers, employ a faith community nurse or spiritual caregiver who focuses on the care needs of the elderly and sick in the congregation, and offer respite for caregivers.

Respite, or a short period of rest or relief, plays an especially important role in caregivers’ health and well-being. According to Dr. William Rhoades, geriatrician with Advocate Medical Group in Park Ridge, Ill., there are many things caregivers can do to reduce stress. First and foremost, he says, is finding time to get away and take time for yourself.

“The less stressed caregivers are, the better care they’re likely to provide,” he said. “Reducing your stress levels by focusing some time on yourself will benefit the person you are caring for, as well. It’s a win-win.”

