

Spirituality and Seniors:

How Attending Worship Services Can Improve Overall Health

by Jason Lewis



Image via [Pexels](#)

Helping Isolated Seniors

Senior isolation and [loneliness](#) is a serious issue. It increases the risk of mortality as well as mental illness like depression. Lonely seniors are more likely to suffer from long-term illness and injuries, as well. Unfortunately, in the United States 11 million people aged 65 and older--28% of that particular population-- lived alone at the time of the [2010 census](#). Attending a house of worship helps seniors suffering from loneliness get out of the house and socialize for the good of their overall health.

By staying active, seniors can help ward off isolation and depression. Due to life circumstances that may be unique to their age or health concerns, elderly people often confront a variety of emotions or mindsets that may be somewhat debilitating and hard to bear. These include a sense of isolation, loneliness, boredom, and grief, as well as others. Often these people give into such senses and emotions and turn to risky behaviors including [substance abuse](#). As

mentioned above, it also puts their overall health at risk. When it comes to situations like this, it often takes a loved one to help seniors overcome [isolation](#).

- For many seniors, a large part of their isolation is a lack of transportation. Reduced reflexes and impaired vision make it impossible for them to drive themselves around. Providing a senior with a ride when possible can help improve their outlook. You can also help them look into driver services through a retirement center or a city-sponsored affordable ride program.
- [Pets](#) provide loving companionship that helps to reduce feelings of loneliness in seniors. Even [robotic pets](#) can help raise senior spirits without the responsibilities and clean up that come with a living animal.
- Attending a church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or whatever kind of house of worship you prefer can do so much more than fuel the spirit. The community one experiences in these places and the connections to those with a common passion are also good for a person's overall health. These relationships are even more beneficial for seniors.

Helping a Senior Find a Place of Worship

If a senior you know does not already have a place of worship but they are interested in joining one as a way to decrease feelings of isolation and loneliness, there are certain ways you can help them. Generally, you want to find a place in line with their religion and denomination, though for many people denomination is not of the highest importance. The only way to find out what type of worship service a senior wishes to attend is to ask them.

Proximity is also an important thing to consider. If getting to the church is a long and complicated journey, then a person is less likely to go. While many places offer ride services for seniors on the primary days of worship, your loved one will need alternative means of transportation for days when they miss the rideshare, want to go in for volunteering, or any other reason that may come up.

Finally, to know which house of worship is right for them, your senior loved one needs to experience the place. In fact, they may need to experience several different places more than once before truly knowing which is right for them. They need to feel a sense of community and acceptance. Many religions teach followers that they should pray or meditate on their choice before making one. Being there for them until they find the perfect spiritual home will help support them in this important decision.

Isolation and loneliness puts a senior's overall health at risk. To facilitate community and socialization, many seniors turn to their house of worship. Helping a senior find a place of worship near them can help prevent both physical and mental illness.