



It's Christmas...

...Get me out of here!

Whether you're the one who wears the dog collar or not, Christmas can be a very busy and demanding time for clergy households. We've put together some suggestions for you to consider, to try and make it all a bit easier... they are, if you like, *The 12 Ways of Christmas...*

1. Plan family visits for Twixmas and New Year rather than trying to juggle entertaining and all the services, preparation and duties in the days running up to and on Christmas Day.
2. Consider having a family Christmas meal out, let someone else prepare your sprouts and wash up! Ready/pre-prepared Christmas meals are readily available – swallow your pride and fill up your freezer (although we acknowledge rising prices may make this difficult also). This gives more time to be together and relax on Christmas afternoon and evening.
3. If you still stick with a big family dinner, consider asking everyone to bring a dish or do a job in the kitchen: many hands make light work!
4. Book that post-Christmas leave well in advance to recharge and enjoy some time out when the rest of the world is heading back to work.
5. Have Christmas Day on another day (not the 25th December) – or put the sprouts on now and have presents at Epiphany.
6. If it's only you and your clergy spouse or partner, get involved with the Christmas services rather than sitting at home alone. Maybe volunteer to drive your clergy person between church services on Christmas Eve – from Crib services, Carol services to Midnight Mass. It is very special leaving the church together in the early hours of a cold frosty Christmas morning.
7. If your clergy person is finding it hard to stay awake beyond 3pm on Christmas Day, make sure to have a walk or film planned so there is a chance for them to catch up on some sleep.

8. If you're likely to be on your own on Christmas Day (and, of course, you may prefer it that way), think about who you may like to see or what you want to do.
9. It's OK to be tired. After the days, weeks, months and year that have passed, you may all be feeling exhausted. Tiredness can make us irritable and impatient and much-needed rest may be hard to come by in the busyness of Christmas itself. It's good to be aware of how tiredness affects everyone and the impact that has on others and ourself.
10. Christmas carries a lot of expectations: often ones beyond our capabilities. Yes, there are aspects which are enjoyable but be realistic about how much excitement you can all live up to. Don't let the sun go down on any anger.
11. Have time together. Chances are you may not have seen that much of each other in the pre-Christmas period (maybe even longer than that...). Take time to be together. Do the things which you know will refresh your relationship – those things which remind each of you who you are. (Oh... and no church talk...)
12. What works for you at Christmas? Why not print this is off and write in the space below...

In this time of increasing costs and financial difficulties, the [Clergy Support Trust](#) is available to help all clergy and their families so do visit their website for more details.

These suggestions have been compiled by the Diocese of Exeter's Clergy Household Hub Steering Group. The Hub aims to help families, spouses and partners of clergy to feel at home in Exeter Diocese through information, support and connection. It is run by a volunteer group of clergy spouses and partners with support and oversight from the Diocese of Exeter's Wellbeing Panel.

To find out more, visit exeter.anglican.org and search 'CHH', join us on [Facebook](#) or contact our co-chair, Richard Frost richardnfrost@outlook.com tel: 01626 870288

Happy Christmas!

(hopefully)