



Dear Friends,

A fortnight ago, Kathryn and I became grandparents for the third time. Our second daughter and son-in-law had a baby girl. We are now the grandparents of a boy and two girls. We are incredibly grateful to God. He has filled our cups to overflowing with his many blessings. We also want to thank you for praying with us for the safe arrival of healthy grandbabies.

It has been almost two years since we first became grandparents. Recently, someone reached out by text to say he had just received news that he was to become a grandfather for the very first time. I could hear his excitement as I read his message. His text also said:

I would be grateful if you could provide me with some tips on how to be a good grandfather. I hear that you have some experience in this area.

I was gobsmacked! His request made me feel like the kid whose just received his learner driver's permit being asked by a mate if I could teach him to drive. With that in mind, I replied:

I'd be happy to catch up sometime for a walk and chat about being a grandparent – so long as you realise I am a grandparent who is still very much on his L plates.

This person's request for grandparenting tips gave me reason to pause and reflect on what it is like to be a grandparent and what I have learned about my new role so far.

I want to start by saying, I love being a grandparent. It's a whole lot of joy with none of the responsibilities of parenting.

Take for example, what happened earlier this evening. Our son and daughter-in-law went out for a meal. They asked Kathryn and I to look after our granddaughter. Of course, we said, "Yes." We jump at most opportunities to spend time with our grandkids. It's a win-win situation. Our kids get a night out. We get to hang out with our grandchild.

Our granddaughter was utterly delightful. She is three months old, chatty, smiley and giving intense eye contact. After some playtime, she soon fell asleep. Ten minutes before our kids returned home, she woke up and was grumpy. Little would console her until I started marching up and down the hallway like a soldier belting out what sounded like a beer drinking song, to the words, "Papou, Papou, Papou loves ginger beer" repeated over and over. So, as soon as they walked through the door, I very happily handed over her to them.

Another reflection I had is that I find great joy in watching my children as parents now raising their own offspring. When I visited our daughter and son-in-law a fortnight ago in hospital to meet our new grandchild for the first time, it suddenly struck me that our baby girl was now a mother having babies. I loved watching her nurse our granddaughter.

I also admire how good our children and their spouses are at being parents. I don't feel any compulsion to offer them parenting advice. The opposite is the case. I take my lead from them about what to do to best care for their children. I have learnt to follow the advice of a mate of mine about how to be a good grandparent: "Just keep your mouth shut and your wallet open." That's easy to do when your kids are good at parenting – better than I ever was.

Proverbs 17:6 says, "Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children." Growing old has many challenges, as the body requires more servicing, and young blokes run rings around me on the football field. But one of the greatest blessings of older age is having adult children, seeing them become parents, and enjoying your children's children. And just as Kathryn and I did for our children, we pray our grandkids will grow up to be God's children, trusting and following Jesus for all of their lives.

God Bless,
Mark Adams