The holidays can be a lonely time of the year. While many of us enjoy a full social calendar of celebrations with family and friends, others have nowhere to go and no one to celebrate with. That’s a problem when you consider that prolonged feelings of loneliness can increase the risk of death by anywhere from 26 percent to 45 percent.

A recent survey of adults age 18 and older confirms that connections to friends and family are especially cherished during the holidays — and spending quality time with a loved one is more valuable than any gift.

Which would you rather give up for a week?

- Watching TV: 79%
- Talking with friends and family: 19%
- Don't know: 1%
- Refused: 1%

Which holiday would be hardest to spend alone?

- Christmas/Hanukkah: 62%
- Thanksgiving: 15%
- Mother’s Day: 8%
- Valentine’s Day: 5%
- New Year’s Eve: 4%

Which would be a better holiday present for someone over 65 years old who has limited interaction with others?

- Giving them a practical but fun gift: 8%
- Spending time with them: 91%
- Don’t know: 1%

To learn more, visit connect2affect.org.

Source: Connect2Affect “Connecting with Others Survey” conducted by SSRS from November 11-15, 2016, among a nationally representative sample of 1,002 respondents ages 18 and older.

Contact: Colette Thayer, AARP Research, cthayer@aarp.org