

## PEOPLE IN AGED CARE: POINTING THEM TO & REMINDING THEM ABOUT JESUS

- CHRISTIAN PASTORAL CARE

Ps 23    John 10:11    Mt 9:36    1 Pet 5:

*God is our shepherd who leads, feeds & protects us. Jesus is the good & great shepherd; but he appoints some of his disciples to be undershepherds. We're responsible for shepherding sheep into the fold & sustaining them.*

*A crude example: We are a bit like muster dogs: Diligent    Loyal    Blindly obedient    Fully devoted    to our shepherd, Jesus*

- MINISTRY & EVANGELISM TO THE AGED (not exclusively to those in Aged Care!)

Gen 1:26    Gen 47:9    Is 46:4    1 Tim 5:1    Jn 19:26-27

We are made in God's image & so God ascribes an inherent dignity to every person ever born. Sin makes us unworthy of his grace, but no person is worthless. All (regardless of gender, social status, race, creed, intellect must have the opportunity to be pointed to Jesus. Rom 2:11 – we can thank God that he shows no favouritism.

As Jesus suffered untold agony procuring his greatest gift for humankind, his compassion for two of his followers comes to the fore and he makes provision for their future security & companionship. At the time of his greatest loneliness (being abandoned by his disciples & having his Father look away), Jesus is concerned about the loneliness of others, particularly his aged mother.

One of the most common issues that afflict the aged is crushing loneliness!

- THE WHO, WHEN, WHERE, WHY & HOW OF VISITING

**Who:** All who want, not just Christians or not just the 'easy ones'. Not all aged people grow old graciously. Sometimes after a visit we have a spring in our step / Other times we can be quite gloomy

**When:** Suitable time for them    **Not** – straight after breakfast or around designated mealtimes  
Weekends often when family visit    REGULAR

**Where:** Aged Care facility; home visit; invite to your home (a& take out your best crockery;  
OR: Take them out somewhere for a cuppa or a drive; invite them to church if mobile

**Why:** To lead to Jesus.    To be a friend – Aged Care Dining-rooms can be surprisingly hushed;  
\*we are commanded to 'defend the cause' of the forgotten,  
\*to bring cheer – "You're looking much better today – you look 10 years younger than you did last week!"

**How:** \*Intentional (Offer Prayer)    \*Interested (look at photos, ask about family, their childhood, etc)

\*Invested (Give time they need)                      \*Involved (anything you need?)

- SOME PRACTICALITIES

Always knock. Enter the room with a smile & remind them of your name

If they've been involved in something before you came, try to connect in some way

Don't be afraid to touch in an appropriate way especially when you're praying with them

Treat staff & visitors with courtesy

If responsible for church services:

If using an order of service, the print should be BIG & keep reminding where we're up to

Speak slowly, loudly & clearly    Ensure the message is no longer than 5 minutes

Focus on the familiar e.g well-known hymns, Lord's prayer (traditional), Creeds, Familiar liturgy

- A REFLECTION FROM ANNE STRACHAN

Making my life experience count

Each of us has a whole life of experience and how can we best make use of them to encourage older people and with Gods help point people to Jesus?

Growing up I had an old neighbor who taught me to crochet a lace collar in superfine cotton. In my 20's my own Grandma & I spent hours happily chatting and knitting together. About the same time many old folks showed me how to follow Jesus. I've been blessed with older people around me all my life.

All my life I've loved handcrafts, knitting, embroidery, weaving, spinning, sewing & bobbin lace.

I've also loved languages: N S D are very similar so I enjoyed switching as I met people from those countries. I learnt English and German and got by with my basic Japanese the 2 years I lived there

All these experiences give me opportunity to connect with people. I've been given much so how can I best use it?

Through the years I've connected with people who love handcraft. At Symes T I have knitted with ladies and it's been fun to show my continental way of knitting and my peculiar way of casting on. I've enjoyed learning new ways from old friends.

I sometimes come across people from Germany & Switzerland, and they enjoy talking about the old country. And they love to hear the old language. I don't know how many times I've recited Lorelai. A few years ago at Symes T there was a lady from Holland that I could speak German with and we laughed at my hopeless way of pronouncing certain Dutch words.

I've also talked with farmers about the orchards in Stanthorpe and boasted about being able to drive different old tractors and cherry pickers and working in a packing shed. I've had great conversation in doctors waiting room where I've been knitting.

However, the most precious times for me has been when I've been able to recite the bible verse in German from John 16:33 and have people looking at me in amazement.

Another special moment was when together with a daughter I sang "Jesus loves me" over the bed of a very old lady who hadn't been responding to anything. She opened her eyes and gave us a big smile. Those moments are precious.

So, God has given us each many different experiences. And I pray that we may use them to spread some sunshine amongst our elderly folks and point them to Jesus when the opportunity comes.

- WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT DEMENTIA?

A quiz *True or False*

1. Dementia is a normal part of aging
2. Dementia primarily affects memory
3. Only elderly people get dementia
4. Dementia is fatal
5. If a family member has it you are likely to acquire it
6. You cannot live well with dementia
7. It is likely caused by cooking in aluminium pots or by vaccines
8. It can be cured by coconut oil or cold showers
9. Dementia is more common in females than males

ANSWERS: They are all false except 4

- Some explanations:
1. It is not normal, but a progressing regressive brain condition
  2. Dementia can affect language, perception, mobility, personality, etc
  3. People in their 30s or 40s can acquire dementia
  4. Some people die from the effects of dementia e.g. falls
  5. It can be hereditary but not probable
  6. With the right treatment & care, dementia sufferers may live a life of reasonable quality for some years after diagnosis
  - 7 & 8. There is no research that supports these commonly-held beliefs
  9. Females generally have a longer life-span & so are more susceptible to dementia

- THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM – DEATH

A commonly held misconception: “People in aged Care must be very open to seriously considering their demise.” But this is generally untrue. Most people end their life as they have lived it.

Research shows that the biggest concern is not death itself but the process of dying. The second biggest concern is for those who are left (family & friends).

Unless they are open about discussing death, introduce & pursue this issue with great sensitivity, especially with anyone who doesn’t seem to be a Christian.

Focus on positive scriptures: e.g 1 Cor 15; John 14:1-6 Rev 21:1-4

Tell them what YOU are looking forward to