

# Top Tips



## Faith in Later Life

### Helping older people to navigate change

Lucy Honeysett



**Reaching older people with the good news of Jesus**



**Discipling older Christians to become like Jesus**



**Mobilising them to be disciple-makers**

### Rooted in Scripture: What does the Bible say?

Though things change and life can feel very uncertain and frightening at times, God is always with us, giving us strength in times of need (Isaiah 41:10, John 14:16) even in the darkest times (Psalm 23:4), He is sovereign over our lives and circumstances (Job 42:2), and He gives us one another to share love and support (Gal 6:2). Psalm 139 beautifully expresses God's knowledge of us, His care over us, His presence with us and the value He places on us. It also reminds us that given the depth of knowledge God has about us, we need to be right with Him, and we're invited into relationship with a Sovereign God who then promises to never leave us or abandon us (Deut 31:8).

### Fostering Fruitfulness: What difference can this make?

As a church family we have the wonderful opportunity to walk well with those who love Christ, who are in the midst of change and uncertainty; gently reminding them of God's protection, His never-changing character and His deep love and care through all seasons.

For those who don't yet know Christ, difficult changing circumstances, with life feeling out of control and fears growing, can bring gospel opportunity as people question the purpose of life, where God is in times of difficulty and if there's more to life.

We can share the solid rock on which we stand and draw people into relationship with our loving Saviour.

### Tips at a glance

**Listen Well**

**Avoid Promises you can't keep**

**Think about a Plan**

**Remember our worth in Christ**

**Expect God to be at Work**



## Faith in Later Life's Top Tips



1

**Listen well.** It's a privilege to listen to people facing uncertainty and experiencing change. Some will be carrying pain, loss, grief, anxiety and fear. Ask for God's help to show deep compassion, don't brush aside fears but take time to see things from their perspective. There's great power in simply being heard.

2

**Avoid promises you can't keep.** When life feels out of our grip, it's normal to want to regain control. Try to steer people away from making concrete plans e.g. "I'm never moving into a care home". We may find ourselves needing this level of care and avoiding it could withhold dignity and comfort. Remind one another that we've never really been in control of life, and we're invited to give control to God who knows us better than ourselves and will always do things for our good.



### Further Inspiration

For more on this subject, please head over to our Resources on our website at [faithinlaterlife.org](http://faithinlaterlife.org).

If you lead a ministry among older people in your church or Christian community, we'd love you to join our network – it's free and you can find out more on our website.

3

**Think about a plan.** Some may say, 'I'd love this hymn at my funeral'. Use this opportunity to ask if they've made a funeral plan and jot down favourite Bible passages and songs. It will be a blessed process and will help the individual and loved ones. It may even be a gospel opportunity. Others may say, 'I'd love to die peacefully in my sleep'. This could lead to a conversation with their GP about resuscitation and enabling a natural peaceful death when that day comes.

4

**Remember our worth in Christ.** We are precious to God, made in His image and this doesn't change as we age, become unwell or become dependent. It's important we see people through God's lens and remind them of their intrinsic worth and usefulness to Christ. We never retire as Christians. He has good works planned for us and He wants to reach those around us who don't yet know Christ.

5

**Expect God to be at work.** Many of us will testify to knowing God's presence most powerfully in the hard and painful seasons of life when we felt our weakest and completely out of control. Be prepared to share your story. Also, be praying for those around you who are experiencing great change, and be ready to share the gift of Jesus with them.

The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, 'The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him.' Psalm 92: 12-15

