

Special Communities – The Elderly

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Themes for Christian Studies: God is Love; God is Patient

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Special Communities

The Elderly

God is Patient, God is Kind



As people grow older, they slow down and cannot react quickly.

Interview an elderly person and find out these things:

- The daily jobs they find difficult to do
- Whether they sometimes feel unsafe and why
- The kind of help they need
- Their main physical problems

People age at different rates. Two seventy-year old people can look and feel very different.

Moving around

Try moving your arm at the elbow. Try moving your hand at the wrist. The points where the body moves are called joints. They are like hinges. As we get older, the joints don't work as well. They can become stiff and it is hard to move around.

Eating the right food

An elderly person needs to eat wisely. The body cannot break down and use as much sugar when we get old.

Muscles

An elderly person may not be able to exercise as much as younger people. Why?

An elderly person may therefore have less muscle. Protein foods can help to build muscle. Protein foods are meats, eggs, dairy products, nuts, seeds, lentils and chickpeas.

Bones

As people get older their bodies start to wear out. The body cannot mend itself as well as it used to. Bones get brittle and break easily and take a long time to mend.

Elderly people need to eat foods to help their bones stay strong. These foods are green leafy vegetables, fruits, vegetables, seeds and some dairy products.

Heart

In an elderly person, the blood doesn't flow as quickly around the body. This means that some fats can get stored in the arteries, where they shouldn't be stored. The arteries allow blood to flow around the body from the heart. But if they become blocked, it can cause a heart attack. To stop this from happening, an elderly person needs to eat only good fats like olive oil, avocados and nuts. They should not eat fats that are highly processed and highly heated. Margarine is one of these. It is not a good fat. Olive oil, nuts and avocados are good fats.

Teeth

Some elderly people have false teeth, and can't chew as well as you can. This means they may not be able to eat hard foods like raw carrots.

Activity:

Now that you know what foods an elderly person needs, and doesn't need, plan three healthy meals for an elderly person – breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Hearing and eye sight

Most elderly people cannot see or hear as well as they used to.

Things to try:

Try on some glasses.

Listen to music and talking that is very soft.

Think:

How did you feel when you had glasses on?

How did you feel when the music and talking were hard to hear?

God is patient, God is kind

The Bible says, "Love is patient, love is kind." (1 Corinthians 13:4). Jesus was patient and kind with all people. Jesus was especially patient and kind with children. One day Jesus was going to teach about God, as He often did. But this day lots of children came up to Jesus. The disciples, (friends of Jesus), said, "Send these children away. They are being a nuisance." But Jesus said, "No, let the children come to me, because I love children, and children are part of the Kingdom of God." (Matthew 19:13-14)

Children have more energy than older people. Children are more active. A child might think it's boring to sit down quietly and have a chat with an elderly person. But remember, Jesus is patient with you, so He wants you to be patient with others. Some elderly people may be lonely or sad. Think about how much joy you could bring to an elderly person by spending time with them!

Elderly People can teach us many things

The Bible says, "Listen to your father, and when your mother is old show her your appreciation. (Proverbs 23:22 GNB)

Elderly people should be respected. They have a life time of experience to share with younger people. Grandparents can help their grandchildren to understand more about God.

2 Timothy 1:5 tells us about the faith of a grandmother called Lois.

Questions:

- 1) What are three changes that can take place in a person's body as they grow old?
- 2) Write down three of the most important thing or things you didn't know before about elderly people.
- 3) How would you speak to an elderly person if they could not hear well?
- 4) How would you move around an elderly person who cannot walk well? Be careful not to cause them to trip over.
- 5) What serious injury could happen to an elderly person if they trip over?
- 6) What could you do to help an elderly person?
- 7) People who help elderly people have to be patient. Why?
- 8) We have to be kind to elderly people. Why?