

Top Tips



Faith in
Later Life

Easing Loneliness

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Rooted in Scripture: What does the Bible say?

Jesus knew loneliness telling His disciples, "...you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave Me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with Me" (John 16:32, ESV). Recognising the impact of social isolation and loneliness on the physical, mental and social health of people of all ages the local Church can potentially offer life-changing opportunities of community, connection and friendship. God wants to meet us in our loneliness. Psalm 68:6 reminds us that God settles the lonely in families - the Church is a wonderful family! God may not take away the loneliness, but as we put our hope in God, we will experience His nearness. "For it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you" (Deut 31:6).

- ✓ Reaching older people with the good news of Jesus
- ✓ Discipling older Christians to become like Jesus
- ✓ Mobilising them to be disciple-makers

Fostering Fruitfulness: What difference can this make?

As our communities and many congregations are ageing, loneliness is probably one of the most significant pastoral challenges for the Church in this coming era of increasing social media influence, AI, and rampant individualism.

Our current landscape of relational poverty can change, and if it did, we would have **deeper discipleship**, a more **united church**, a more **cohesive society**, **less lonely leaders** and **more followers of Jesus of all ages**.

Phil Knox from the Evangelical Alliance in his book 'The best of friends' reminds us it turns out, the secret of eternal life is not what you know but who you know.

Tips at a glance

Opportunities
to connect

Friendships
across
generations

Removing
the hidden
barriers

Befriending

Belonging
with
purpose

Faith in Later Life's Top Tips

1

Opportunities to Connect

Loneliness is the business of every church and community. Look again at what you already run—coffee mornings, lunch clubs, home groups—through the lens of loneliness. Who is coming, and why? What's happening beneath the surface of them simply "being there"? And who is missing—what do we know, and has anyone checked in?

2

Friendships across generations bring fresh perspective and shared strength. Is intergenerational life active in your church? Invite different ages into Bible studies and outreach you already run. Partner with a local school event and adapt it so older people and young adults can join in. Start small: tweak what exists, build on what works, then grow from there.

Further Inspiration

For more on this subject, please head over to our Resources on our website at 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

Removing the Hidden Barriers

We can get trapped in our traditions. Aim for a peaceful, contemporary expression of the body of Christ – strengthening believers and sharing the transforming gospel. Use local data, reduce stigma, and listen to lived experience. Look for hidden practical barriers too: helping people get to groups, signage, hearing loops, toilets, lighting, easy seating, and offline communication.

4

Befriending is a way to bridge the gap to those who wouldn't normally connect with lunch clubs, over-60s groups, or church at all. It's a ministry beyond the usual pastoral rhythm: intentional outreach to others (in person or over the phone) in the community who won't cross our doorstep. It's about showing up, listening well, and building trust over time.

5

Belonging With Purpose

Loneliness is an unsurprising symptom of an individualistic society. Belonging grows through engagement in planned programmes, on teams, and through ordinary encounters in the community. Every church has lonely people, so we must be intentional in cultivating community and helping people belong.

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

