

# Top Tips



## Faith in Later Life

### Great Care Home Ministry

Fay Wantenaar



**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?

Scripture leaves us in no doubt: God calls us to honour older people (Leviticus 19:32) and to visit the vulnerable (James 1:27). Care homes are full of widows, and many who feel like “orphans” too – without close family or support. And older people are so close to God’s heart that he promises, “Even to your old age... I will sustain you and I will carry you” (Isaiah 46:4).

When we visit the sick and frail, we reflect God’s compassion and are being transformed into his likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18). More than that, Jesus says we are honouring him: “Whatever you did... you did for me” (Matthew 25:40).

Great ministry in care homes therefore pleases our Father who is in heaven. It makes his heart sing!

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

Care home ministry can be beautifully fruitful – for older people, for visitors, and for the whole home. Kind, consistent presence relieves loneliness and gently reminds residents: you are not forgotten; you are known, loved, and valued by God. It widens their world, reconnecting them with community beyond the walls of the care home. It can lift wellbeing in every sense – physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

And it does more than “keep them going”: it helps older believers to still bear fruit in old age and to declare God’s faithfulness (Psalm 92:12–15). It strengthens weary saints to endure and to finish well – running across the line, not stumbling.

It also gives older people the chance to bless us. They have much to give – if we will come.

### Tips at a glance

**Relationships and respect are key**

**Pray for opportunities and start small**

**Keep it simple and relational**

**Know God’s Word**

**Offer to share what you love!**



## Faith in Later Life's Top Tips

1

### **Build relationships and be respectful.**

Take time to build relationships with the Home Manager and the staff. Seek to encourage them in the jobs that they do. Remember that care homes are highly regulated environments, you may need to comply with various policies. Be respectful of these and show that you can be trusted.

2

### **Pray for opportunities and start small.**

Pray for opportunities and for people in the home. Nothing happens without prayer. But make sure you get it the right way around – often we get going with something, and then ask the Lord for backup or help. See what He has in mind for the home and the people living there and then start small. Spend time getting to know residents and shape the ministry to meet their needs and abilities.

## 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

**Keep it simple and relational.** If you lead a group activity, like a Bible Study or a Worship Service, don't overcomplicate it. 'Hymn Sings' tend to work quite well with nominal Christians and provide natural opportunities to talk about the words or the story behind the hymn. You could set up a 'Fellowship Group' for Christians in the home. Keep it simple, and the numbers manageable (3 residents works fine to start with).

4

**Know God's Word.** Effective ministry among older people has, at its core, a desire for older people to have an ever expanding and deepening knowledge of God, so that they bear fruit and declare God's righteousness. Read God's word yourself, daily and prayerfully, keep close to Him, so that you are ready to minister to people when the need arises.

5

**Offer to share what you love** – not all care homes need Worship Services, although they are good! Do you have a skill or a hobby that you could share with older people in a nursing home? Perhaps you can run a knitting club, a chess club, play a musical instrument or have a pet you can bring in. Whatever it is, share your skills and your hobbies with people. Show that God has given us everything richly to enjoy (1 Timothy 6:17).

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

