

Seminar

The Mature Years

BC UK Biblical Counselling UK

Helen Thorne-Allenson

1

Discussion

What are your hopes and dreams for your later life?
 What hopes and dreams are you aware of from others in your church family?

IDENTITY

2

Hope and dreams

- Free time
- Loss
- Pain
- Death
- Time with family
- No more office stress
- Dementia
- More investment in church family
- Time to study
- Illness
- Unstructured time
- Struggling to make ends meet
- Isolation

IDENTITY

3

Discussion

In what ways does culture mold your view of later life?

IDENTITY

4

Old v Young

- Culture of youth
- Energy and creativity trumps wisdom
- Though in some spheres of life (politics / media) there is no limit to service
- Identity in productivity v identity in emotion

IDENTITY

5

Discussion

What big questions of identity arise as we consider later life?

IDENTITY

6

Big questions

- What is my value when I can't contribute to work?
- What is my value if I can't bear or bring up children?
- What is my value if I have failing health? Etc

IDENTITY

7

Seminar structure

- Proactive preparation
- Reactive pastoral care

IDENTITY

8

See the call

Moses was in his 80s when he saw the burning bush
 Caleb was in his 80s when he entered the promised land
 Daniel still active in service in his 80s
 Anna was still in the temple in her 80s waiting for the Lord

The Bible sees later life as a time of service – fruitful for God

IDENTITY

9

See the honour

You shall rise before the grey-headed and honour the presence of an old man and fear your God; I am the LORD." (Leviticus 19:32)

"The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, It is found in the way of righteousness." (Proverbs 16:31)

IDENTITY

10

See the heart preparation needed

- Prayer (Philippians 4:6)
- Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- Battle (Ephesians 6:10-11)

IDENTITY

11

See the opportunities for service

- Still a role-model (Titus 2)
- Still called to speak (Ephesians 4:15)
- Still called to use gifts
- Still called to pray
- Still called to spur one another on (Hebrews 10:24)
- Still have the Great Commission
- Still in the image of God

IDENTITY

12

See what the church can do

- Retirement preparation
- Marriage in later life preparation
- Menopause evenings
- Mentoring partnerships (general – or specific e.g. menopause)
- Later Life Bible Study Groups
- Training for "grey evangelism"
- Seniors' ministry
- Think biblically about end of life care

IDENTITY

13

DISCUSSION

What does Seniors' Ministry look like in your church?

IDENTITY

14

Walking alongside the struggling

Attend to **transitions** with

- Compassion
- Listening – exploring expectations
- Prayer
- Problem-solving
- Mediation

BCUK resource: Retirement and Identity / suite of Menopause resources

IDENTITY

15

Walking alongside the struggling

- Attend to **losses** with
- Comfort
 - Listening – exploring the impact and interplay of various losses
 - Practical Support
 - Reflection on the Lord's presence
 - Lament
 - Community
- BCUK resources: Grief Gathering and other loss resources

IDENTITY

16

Walking alongside the struggling

- Attend to **chronic illness** with
- Compassion
 - Listening
 - Involvement in church even if not able to be present
 - Access to simple nourishment (spiritual and physical)
 - Willingness to talk about loss of intimacy – loss of hope etc
 - Prayer
 - Discussion about end of life
- BCUK resource: micro-devotions (more to come)

IDENTITY

17

Walking alongside the struggling

- Attend to questions of **value and purpose** with
- Compassion
 - Listening
 - Reflection on Ephesians 1 – being in Christ
 - Identifying gifts and opportunities
 - Taking thoughts captive

IDENTITY

18

Later life, hope and Psalm 92

Read Psalm 92

- What does this Psalm say about later life?
- How does that chime or conflict with your views?
- How do you think your views developed?
- What beliefs is God calling you to turn away from?
- What does fruitfulness and flourishing look like?
- How do we pursue such flourishing?
- How shall we respond to the Lord in light of his word?
- What practical steps shall we take?

IDENTITY

19

Bcuk.org/ resources

20

Any questions?



IDENTITY

21
