

Editorial

Seniors Ministry

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My church is doing a great work amongst 'seniors'. Among other things we run, on a monthly basis, two luncheon clubs, a session on Christian basics followed by a lunch entitled 'Food for Thought', and a Sunday afternoon 'seeker' service. At a guess I would think that we must be in touch with some 200 'seniors'. But increasingly the 'seniors' who come to us are elderly, if not 'frail-aged' - walking sticks and Zimmer-frames abound! Somehow we need to reach the active 'retireds'.

With that in mind I wrote the following 'memo' for myself:

"People attending pre-retirement courses are encouraged to develop a positive image of the next period of life. 'Retirement - the adventure begins!' Unfortunately the term 'seniors ministry' evokes an image of 'age' and 'passivity' - it is as if the retired are there to be 'served', rather than to be up and doing themselves.

Maybe we need to do away with the term 'seniors ministry' - indeed, maybe we need to do away with the term 'seniors'.

If we are to attract the 'younger retired', then we must develop a more outgoing and demanding programme of activities. The needs of the 'younger retired' are not the same as those of the 'frail aged'.

The younger retired want to

1. **Socialise.** One of the good things of being retired is that we have 'permission to play'. Having 'fun' together, however, can involve more than board games or a gentle round of golf! The newly retired now have time to go out together and do things they have never done before.
2. **Use their minds.** Another of the good things of being retired is that we can engage in learning opportunities without having to sit exams! Now is the time to use our minds. Now is the time to read and think - now is the time to listen and learn.
3. **Grow spiritually.** Yet another good thing of being retired is that we now have time to study God's Word, to develop our prayer life, and to explore new and unfamiliar paths of spirituality.
4. **Serve God.** Retirement is a great opportunity to use one's energy, experience, and creativity to do something significant for God. Although the church offers avenues for service through its various organisations,

many of the newly retired are looking for 'projects' either in the local community or in the third world".

What do you think? Have you some positive experiences to share with working with the active retired? What would you call a group for 'seniors'? How do we enable our older people to have fun and enjoy adventure?