



Small group discussion questions November 2017

Chapter & verse – Sheila Telfer (page 17)
Read Psalm 71, followed by Sheila Telfer’s article

1. What situation do you imagine the psalmist being in when you read Psalm 71?
2. Sheila’s article begins by referencing social events for church members over 80, noting that ‘many dislike being labelled as elderly’. How do you feel about the term? What does it imply?
3. The third paragraph of Sheila’s article suggests that ‘most churches depend upon the elderly to keep them running’, later adding: ‘if we required everyone over 70 to retire from the jobs they are currently doing around the church, ... most of our activities would quickly grind to a halt’. Do you agree? Why?
4. Psalm 71 speaks of proclaiming God’s might ‘to all the generations to come’. Do you know older people who do this? How might churches support older people to be active ministers and/or disciples?
5. According to Sheila’s fourth paragraph, Psalm 71 challenges us to find ways of honouring those whose circumstances change, people who are ‘left feeling sidelined, cast off, or forsaken’. How can society address this?
6. The latter part of Sheila’s article focusses on the ways in which she, and her church, can better support people who live with dementia. How dementia-friendly is your church?
7. Sheila ends her article by stressing the importance of respecting ‘those who are confused and disturbed’. Are there people you know who fit that description? What might God say to them?



Chapter 4 verse
Sheila Telfer Chapter & verse
 'Psalm 71 challenges us to honour those whose "usefulness" is curtailed'



The real challenge of life is not the loss of old age, but the loss of usefulness through ageing.
 Psalm 71

A recent church meeting...
 meaning in life through...
 Older people are a huge resource



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For further reflection: 'Even when you turn grey I will carry you. ... I will carry and will save.'
 Isaiah 46:4

Prayer: God of grace, your love has embraced us and valued us, from our first years through to today, and we know that it will continue with us all the way. Help us, we pray, to love and esteem one another with that same ageless and changeless love. Amen.