

Senior Matters

By Steven W. Moore, MBA, LNFA, RHP
Holly Hall Retirement Community
Houston, Texas

The Faith of the Elderly

I have learned that people are different. Whether they are 20 years old or 80, I know that I can't make assumptions about how anyone will act based on what others their age do. When it comes to religious faith of seniors, I think this holds especially true.

When one has lived to be over 73 years old, they have exceeded their life expectancy. During their time on earth, some folks learn quite a bit and others seem to have made the trip without becoming encumbered by knowledge. So it is with spiritual matters. Seniors may be closer to their final reward than the younger generation, in some instances, but they are no different regarding what they believe about life after death or other spiritual matters.

The Bible teaches that faith is a gift of God. We have to have it in order to accept God's grace and mercy. We can ask for more of it and some of us are gifted in matters of faith. Being elderly does not make one an expert on matters of faith. I have witnessed the wide diversity of views held by seniors. However, they really are no different than the range one would find in any age group.

We typically fear death. Whether it is because of the unknown or because we fear the pain of the dying process, death is something that tends to make mankind uncomfortable. We will all do it, short of the Second Coming. Yet we don't talk much about it. Seniors are no different, although most have had to deal with death much more than the younger generation. They have gone through the deaths of their parents, friends and sometimes children. While some lean on their faith through those times, others react bitterly, much like any other age group.

I have seen or heard of folks who greet death as a friend because, they say, they will get to be with their Lord. Others fight it like an enemy, as if death is a failure. For those of us who care about seniors, we can learn the ministry of offering our presence. Having someone to be there when someone is afraid or lonely is an answered prayer. Having someone near when death comes is a frequently voiced request of seniors. Dealing with the issues in our spiritual life and having the courage to face what is frightening or uncomfortable is often necessary to provide support to those we love.

Discuss your faith with your family members and learn about their spiritual walk. There are lots of resources to help. If I can be of assistance, please contact me at Holly Hall.