

WORLD FEDERATION DAY ‘ 2013

Study Guide Focus:

Care for the Elderly



“Grey hair is a crown of splendour; it is attained by a righteous life”

(Proverbs 16:31)

Prepared by:

METHODIST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP OF SRI LANKA

WORLD FEDERATION DAY 2013

Study Guide Focus: 'Care for the Elderly'

Suggested Activities for World Federation Day Celebration:

1. Bible Study focusing on Seniors:

The Bible presents growing old as a normal, natural part of life in this world. Invite your Church pastor or Lay-worker to your women's meeting to lead the study and invite senior citizens too to the same. Choose biblical references related to Seniors and Elderly. Emphasise God's power in their old age.

- Psalm 71:18
- 2 Corinthians 4:16
- Isaiah 46:4
- Or you may use the Bible Study Guide.

2. Lecture/ Discussion:

- Invite Seniors/ Elders in your society or in the Church to form groups and place before them some problems which they face every day. Try and find applicable solutions.
- Invite a physician to advise them regarding their physical and emotional pain/health
- Discuss how church women can help seniors in the church.
- Find out when Elders' Day takes place in your own country and choose a day in that month. Make it a point to visit Elders' homes in your society and sit with them for a meal or you can pray for them or listen to their stories.

3. Observance of Elders' Sunday in Church

Message/sermon will focus on Senior citizens.

Seniors will have special participation during the worship service. They can share their experiences and they can teach us about how to walk with God based on a lifetime of experiences.

4. Action Plan:

- Draw up a plan to take care of our elders in the society. How can we as World Federation women/church women help them.
- Identify the senior citizens who are not getting proper care in their own homes. Direct them to Elders' Home or arrange a facility to look after them.
- Arrange a physician for a regular check up of those who are not getting regular medical check ups.
- Church women can visit elder's homes regularly to talk to them and emphasise that we are so blessed to have people of an older age with us as they teach us about how to walk with God (this is a moral support). And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard their hearts.
- Women's group can gather and collect some funds to look after bed-ridden patients in the Elder's Homes.

Guide information/Facts for discussions

Definition of an older or elderly person

Most developed world countries have accepted the chronological age of 65 years as a definition of 'elderly' or older person, but like many westernized concepts, this does not adapt well to the situation in Africa. While this definition is somewhat arbitrary, it is many times associated with the age at which one can begin to receive pension benefits. At the moment, there is no United Nations standard numerical criterion, but the UN agreed cutoff is 60+ years to refer to the older population.

Although there are commonly used definitions of old age, there is no general agreement on the age at which a person becomes old. The common use of a calendar age to mark the threshold of old age assumes equivalence with biological age, yet at the same time, it is generally accepted that these two are not necessarily synonymous.

Source: <http://www.who.int/healthinfo/survey/ageingdefnolder/en/>

In April 2002, delegates of 160 governments, intergovernmental institutions and NGOs came together at the United Nations [Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid](#), Spain, in order to revise the [1982 Vienna Plan on Ageing](#) which had established a global long-term strategy for the ageing population. The 2002 Assembly's outcome document, the [Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing](#) (MIPAA), commits governments to integrate the rights and needs of older persons into national, as well as international, economic and social development policies.

Protecting the Rights of Older People:

This document details ten reasons why the United Nations Open Ended Working Group on Ageing should recommend the implementation of measures to strengthen the rights of older adults.

Additional information:

The World Health Organization and Alzheimer's Disease International jointly released a report on the global impact of dementia to encourage policymakers and others to address the impact of dementia. Additionally, the authors want to establish dementia as a global health issue. The report discusses epidemiology, current policy, health and social care systems, caregiving and care givers, public perception issues, and future courses of action.

Source: <http://www.globalaging.org/agingwatch>

BIBLE STUDY: HONOUR YOUR PARENTS

Biblical Reference: Mark 7:1-23

Introduction:

The Bible has much to say about caring for elderly parents and other family members who are not able to care for themselves. The early Christian church acted as the social services for other believers. They cared for the widows, the poor, the sick and the orphans who had no one else to care for them.

God will not honour those who will not obey His Command to honour their parents. If we desire to please God and be blessed, we should honour our parents. When we honour and care for our parents, we are serving God as well.

God exhorts us to honour father and mother. He values honouring parents enough to include it in the ten commandments (Exodus 20:12) "honour your father and mother". This is the first commandment with a promise: "so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth."

When we do this

1. There is a respect that is demanded

Eph 6:2. "honour thy father and mother". What does the honour mean? It means children are to hold their parents in high respect. Obviously, we are commanded to honour our parents. They have been placed in our life by the will of Almighty God to be with us until we reach maturity. We are to call to mind the sacrifices they have made to bring us into the world and to nurture us to maturity. We should remember the long nights spent beside the sickbed and the many hours worked to provide food, shelter and clothing.

Some times we are quick to forget the sacrifices our parents made for us when they are in need of care themselves.

Jesus was the great example. In Luke 2:51, and as a dying man, He remembered to honour His mother by seeing that she was cared for.

Often we think: How do we honour our parents? Honour them with both actions and attitudes. (Mark 7:6) Honour their unspoken as well as spoken wishes. In Mathew 1:3-9 the word honour is a verb and, as such, demands right action.

2. There is a respect that is deserved

Honouring your father and mother is being respectful in word and action. The parents deserve honour. When we give them love and time and patience and encouragement and hope, they will respond with respect and love of their own.

King Solomon urged children to respect their parents (Pro 1:8, 13:1) although we may no longer be directly under their authority. Even Jesus submitted Himself to both His earthly parents (Luke 2:51) and to His Heavenly Father (Mathew 26:39). Following Christ's example, we should seek to honour our parents in much the same way that we strive to bring glory to God – in our thoughts, words and actions.

It is not always that the elders can have all what they like. Perhaps they have no family members, no one to call their own. Then it can be that the "Church Family" is always there, Dr. E S Devasagayam in a talk said, that even if his own family, neighbours or friends leave for better prospects, migrate, or even enter "glory" the church family will always be there, while one remains in the church family.

One may say that the members of the church, too, keep moving. Yes indeed. But the church keeps building and getting new members. So it is good for elders to get involved in church activities.

Summary Points:

We as believers in Christ should know that life is guided by the Word of God. The Word of God should guide our lives to live the way God expects of us. That is the main reason for His saving grace.

“Honour your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be long and that it may be well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.”

This portion of the scripture should be read over and over till it seeps into our lives.

Discussion points:

The subject in conversation now is “The elders need by command and obligation and they need our care.

Today, in many countries, there are many elders in “Elders’ Homes” as the children are busy with their own jobs or responsibilities, their own children to mind, or they may have migrated.

In Sri Lanka this situation has sent numbers of elders into Homes for Elders. They are being cared for care-takers. The elders are looked after in organized institutions, with discipline and care. But will they feel at home and get the love they long for? The meals are well prepared to suit their palate and their physical need. Mental and physical therapy is well provided, indoor games, outdoor games, a stroll, if and when they need, even spiritual food may be given occasionally.

More than all these, it is the natural cry by the elder for love from their own dear ones. The love from family members, regular inquiry, regular visits by children and grandchildren are the therapies that certainly keep the elders in contentment. These are the things that give joy and health to the elders.

ORDER OF SERVICE

HYMN

Through all the changing scenes of life

Through all the changing scenes of life,
in trouble and in joy,
the praises of my God shall still
my heart and tongue employ.

O magnify the Lord with me,
with me exalt his Name;
when in distress to him I called,
he to my rescue came.

The hosts of God encamp around
the dwellings of the just;
deliverance he affords to all
who on his succour trust.

O make but trial of his love;
experience will decide
how blest are they, and only they
who in his truth confide.

Fear him, ye saints, and you will then
have nothing else to fear;
make you his service your delight;
your wants shall be his care.

For God preserves the souls of those
who on his truth depend;
to them and their posterity
his blessing shall descend.

Words: Nahum Tate (1652-1715) and Nicholas Brady (1659-1726), 1696

PRAYER OF INVOCATION OR ADORATION

CONFESSION OF SIN:

Four women dressed in warm colours come forward separately and say the following prayers.

Leader

Let us make our humble confession to Almighty God.

Woman 1

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we have sinned against thee/you, for not enabling senior citizens to fulfil their potential to lead healthy and secure lives.

Woman 2

Our Heavenly Father, we have sinned against thee/you, for not understanding how much the older people contribute to society, and that they should enjoy their right to health care.

Woman 3

Our Heavenly Father, we have sinned against thee/you, for not assisting in establishing senior citizen committees, empowering senior citizens by providing livelihood assistance, capacity building, and rights and advocacy programs.

Woman 4

Almighty God, we have sinned against thee/you, through our own fault, in thought, and word, and deed, and in what we have left undone. For thy/your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve thee/you in newness of life, to the glory of thy/your name. Amen.

WORD OF FORGIVENESS by leader

GLORIA/HYMN (Following your own choice)

PRAYER**Leader:**

We pray for our own institutions, which are working among the senior citizens and the following needs; assisting in establishing senior citizen committees, empowering senior citizens by providing livelihood assistance, capacity building, and rights and advocacy programs.

Especially we pray for the following programs that are taking place in our own countries.

- Home care volunteer training programs for Senior Citizens Committee (SCC) members.
- Home care volunteer training programs for other age groups
- Capacity building training programs for senior citizens
- Training programs for paid home assistants

SCRIPTURE READING**Suggestions:**

Psalm 61: 18

2. Corinthians 4: 16

Isaiah 46: 4

Proverbs 1: 8

Proverbs 13: 1

Exodus 20: 12

Luke 4, 38 – 39

Luke 13: 10 - 13

Parts of the story of Ruth

MESSAGE**OFFERING**

The offering for World Study Day is used by the World Federation to support its ongoing programs such as UN representation, Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship Fund, Area Seminars and the Weaving Together Program.

The gifts of the congregation shall be collected.

You may choose your own hymn.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSIONS:

Woman 1

O God our Father, grant us the help of thy/your Spirit in our prayers for the salvation of humankind.

Lord in thy/your mercy
Hear our prayer

Woman 2

We pray for the whole Church, that in faith and unity it may constantly be renewed by thy/your Holy Spirit for mission and service. We pray that local congregations be ready to serve needy senior citizens enhancing their health condition, necessary care and social security.

Lord in thy/your mercy
Hear our prayer

Woman 3

We pray for our own country and for all who have authority and influence that they may serve their fellow citizens in wisdom, honestly, and compassion. We pray for our government to provide free or affordable health and eye care services to vulnerable senior citizens, to conduct necessary medical tests and provide medical advice.

Lord in thy/your mercy
Hear our prayer

Woman 4

We pray for all senior citizens who are in sorrow, need, anxiety, and sickness, for the lonely, the despairing, and the persecuted, and for all who suffer from cruelty, injustice, or neglect, that they may find strength and hope.

Lord in thy/your mercy
Hear our prayer

Woman 5

We pray for the communities in which we live and work, that we may use thy/your gifts to set every senior citizens free from their needs and anxiety and together find joy in thy/your creation.

Lord in thy mercy
Hear our prayer

Leader

O God, in whom we are one family on earth and in heaven,
we remember in thy/your presence those who have died.
Help us to follow the example of thy/your saints in light,
and bring us with them into the fullness of thy/your eternal joy,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

THE LORD'S PRAYER**CLOSING HYMN****BENEDICTION**