

*Why not do a survey? That's what everybody else does. The Government and political parties are strongly influenced by opinion polls and focus groups. They want to know what people want so they can present their policies as the best answer to what the nation is looking for. Businesses do survey and market research to find out what their potential customers want. They ring you up, send you questionnaires or*

*stop you in the street, just to discover what you really want. The newspapers, radio programmes and television producers are always keen to discover people's preferences and opinions. Phone-in programmes are extremely popular. It seems that everyone wants to know what everybody else wants. So why not do a survey to find out what older christians think and want. So I did.*

## What do you want?

*by Roger Hitchings*

04-4-1



Roger Hitchings

I wanted to know how older people in our churches feel about the way things are. So I asked a group of people who attended the FIEC Conference at Pwllheli earlier this year. And what did they tell me? Exactly what I already knew. And probably what you know as well. What was it?

### **Older People want to be understood and valued**

That is part of being human and is quite normal. But sadly many older people feel neglected, unappreciated and unwanted. It's what makes growing old so difficult for a lot of people. Thank God it need not be so. If God has blessed you with a caring Church and even a caring Home you are greatly blessed. But even if that isn't so you can remember and encourage yourself with this wonderful truth – the Lord Jesus understands you and values you – *Malachi 3v17, They will be mine," says the Lord Almighty, "in the day when I make up my treasured possession."* (The Authorised Version says 'jewels', and that is what we are to Him.) So even now we know He will 'never leave us nor forsake us'.

### **Older People want to be useful**

Most of us have tried to be of service to others and in the church throughout our lives. It is difficult to accept not doing so much now. So there is a sense that we have no significance anymore. But that is not true – *Psalm 92v14-15, "They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, "The Lord is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in Him."* Testimony to God's grace, and the witness of a life of contentment and

concern for others, these are the new areas for usefulness. And we must never minimise the importance of prayer.

### **Older People want some confidence for the future**

As frailty increases, and we become less able to manage by ourselves, we face all kinds of anxiety about the future. We hope that our families will help and support us, but that is not always possible. We look to Christian organisations, like Pilgrim Homes, but they have increasingly limiting financial constraints. We know we may well need quite considerable care and we want to maintain our spiritual life as best we can. So what can we hope for – *Isaiah 46:4, "Even to your old age and grey hairs I am He, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you."* Ah yes, the Lord will care for us. The future is entirely in His hands and we can always trust Him without fear. When we look to the future we must also look at the Lord and put the two together.

### **Older People want to be godly**

We are Christians. We love the Lord. We want to be like Jesus in all we do. We want others to know about the Saviour. We want to see

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Him glorified in every aspect of our lives and the world around us. But we feel less and less able to make an effective contribution. Too often we miss out on adequate pastoral care and strengthening spiritual input. That makes us more anxious about our last days. But will we be as godly as we ought to be? Well, some of us will be given the level of help we need. And sadly others of us will miss out on spiritual input. But the Holy Spirit is at work in us and the Lord will never fail us. So we must look to ourselves and keep ourselves in the love of Christ. What do we want? **Philippians 4v19**, "My God will meet all

**your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."**

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To all our members and supporters,

*The pleasure of your company is anticipated at our*

## *Annual General Meeting*

Saturday, 14th May, 2005 in Brighton



Please make a note in your diary. The AGM is the one occasion in the year when members, supporters, staff and residents can meet and catch up with the news.

The AGM is an important highlight in our year. Please avoid making arrangements for events that would clash with the date.