



Message from our Moderator on the International Day of Older Persons, Thursday 1 October, a day for organisations, including our Church, to acknowledge and say thank you for the huge contribution older people make to our churches and communities.

## Thank you to all our older people

I am writing to express great appreciation of our 'older persons', our most senior members. We acknowledge the support and help that our older people give to churches. They have led, toiled, served, and stood firm in their faith communities. They have sacrificed and offered the best years, in fact, all of their lives for our churches, for their faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The ideal perfect community is where we have all ages, from babies and infants to the most senior - 70, 80, 90 even 100 years. Parishes that do have all generations are blessed. For me, it is the most significant sign of a healthy community. A church of all ages, where each is valued and treasured, relevant and significant. The life of these communities is...the people, the people, the people...he tangata, he tangata, he tangata, says the Maori proverb about what is most important.

As we face the challenges of 2020, it may not seem it but we are in a better position in Church life than at any other time in regards to our people, buildings, assets, finance, and investments (land, property, and people skill sets). Our senior folk have committed themselves and set up well the next generation for whatever the future holds. They have been through many hard experiences that will help our walk of life.

*"Wisdom belongs to the aged, and understanding to the old" - Job 12:12.*

Over time, age and longevity in years has been seen and expressed by our senior peoples as true wisdom. My favourite learning in life is at the feet of older people; whatever the event, occasion, discipline, field, ie Bible Study, prayers, fellowships, fishing, gardening, in fact in any area of life. I liken learning and being enlightened by older folks as to drawing on or being filled from the oasis of God's abundance of knowledge and grace. Senior people have experienced goodness of, and a longer relationship with God than we have experienced. Thank you, our mighty warriors for Jesus Christ. Lead on.

I offer a word of encouragement for our senior people. C.S Lewis wrote, "You are never too old to set a new goal or dream a new dream". Continue to live life to the full. This is also inspiring and real motivation for the next generations to look up to. Old age is a blessing from the Lord. We should never be afraid of aging. One sure certainty in life, with the blessing of God, and we pray good health too, most will each reach senior life.

How exciting. I can't wait...oh, I'm nearly there! It's going to be something wonderful with the blessings of my family, church and community.

God bless each and every one of our dear and beloved older persons. You are amazing. Your inspiration and example are precious to us all. Please share this message with all the beloved older people in your church and community.

Fakaofu

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