

## 60, 70, 80, 90 - Planning Ahead for Satisfying Senior Years

*Some years ago a former president of the Methodist Church was speaking about growing older. He said something like: 'It is sometimes claimed that, when you are over 70, you are going down hill. If this is true, it is a very pleasant hill to be going down.' He himself was over 70 and was enjoying life.*

In this book retired Methodist minister David Pratt recognises how important it is for those growing older to grasp opportunities that will shape life well and to look forward with hope, not back with regret.

David dedicates the book to his grandmother from whom he learned the wisdom of those old in years and experience.

He says he was challenged to share some of his own ideas when he mentioned to a hospital manager that there seemed to be a gap in the literature dealing with the problems and possibilities of old age. 'Why don't you write it?' she asked. So he did, and the result is a book of drawn from his own



experience of growing older.

While planning ahead makes good sense, beyond making some financial provision for a far off day, people caught up in the busyness of work, family life and social activities may give little thought to growing old. But years pass quickly and decisions relating to the changed circumstances of growing older cannot be put off forever.

David does not presume to provide answers for every older person but rather makes practical suggestions and raises questions for consideration. He touches on issues such as where to live, finance and

money matters, health, facing mortality, interests and hobbies, being grandparents, love and sexuality, being single in a partners' world, security and safety and ageism and discrimination.

At the end there is list of organisations that work with older people and websites and other details to assist with

further enquiries.

Perhaps one of the key factors in achieving satisfying senior years is not just making the right decisions but having a positive attitude to life. David touches on this.

A positive attitude involves being open-minded, looking beyond hurt and disappointment to see what is good, and being willing to learn and forgive. It involves having dreams, making room for other people in one's life, keeping hope alive and deciding what is possible and realistic.

Growing old should not be seen as a threat. David remembers an advertising jingle used by a bank to attract older customers: 'The best is yet to be'. This is an extract from a poem by Robert Browning who wrote, "Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be, the last of life, for which the first was made. Our times are in his hand who saith, 'A whole I planned, youth shows but half; Trust God: See all, nor be afraid.'"

As David says, old age can be trying. But it can also be full of rich moments, new insights, much laughter and enjoyment. This is the conviction that motivates him and shines through his text.

*By David Pratt*

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*Reviewer: John Meredith*