

Discipling with 70 year Olds

A couple of weeks ago our Grandpa had significant surgery to remove cancer in his stomach. Finding ways for my kids, well for all of us really, to connect with what this experience would mean, and to show love and support was challenging.

The night before Grandpa went into hospital the boys and I scooted over to see him in between footy training and cubs.

We had written seven little prayers, on seven post-it notes.

When we arrived we told grandpa that we wanted to pray for him. The boys had chosen a couple of post-it prayers each to read, and I read the rest, each of us taking turns. We read and handed over the post-it note to Grandpa.

That was it. Not a lot else really was said.

Two weeks later Grandpa came home from hospital having made a very impressive recovery, despite a heart attack after the first week.

Regular family emails had updated everyone on his progress, but a special email arrived, just for us. In it, Grandpa recorded a response to each prayer that we had prayed...

Dear Christopher, Beth, Timothy and Benjamin,

Now my stay in hospital is over, and I'm home again I want to thank you for your care and prayers. The seven gold notes went with me into the hospital - and each one had a special answer:

1. We pray, knowing that you are our great God-full of grace and power

I felt secure through the whole time!

2. We pray for the people looking after Grandpa to be understanding and wise

The nurses were so very kind and encouraging and the surgeon did his job with great skill.

3. We pray for clear communication between everyone about what is going on for Grandpa

When the heart attack came, the nurses recognised the symptoms and were able to call on a specialist team of doctors.

4. We pray for Grandpa's body to heal well

The doctors were surprised at how quickly I healed.

5. We pray for Grandpa's muscles to be relaxed and his mind to be calm

I was able to relax in bed and feel calm and confident that all was going according to plan.

6. We pray for good sleeps with no worries for Grandma and Grandpa

Grandpa slept well at night, waking only for medical checks.

7. We pray for Grandpa to learn how he needs to eat safely

Grandma is using a new food blender that processes the food finely enough for me to eat easily and safely.

8. We pray this will be a special time when Grandpa feels God's care and love.

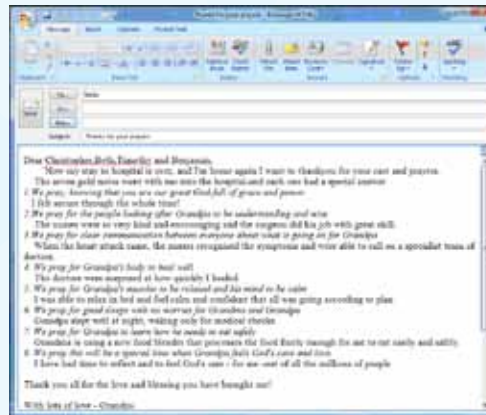
I have had time to reflect and to feel God's care - for me - out of all the millions of people.

Thank you all for the love and blessing you have brought me!

With lots of love - Grandpa.

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Multi-Age Worship



I don't know of a better way to grow the faith of two young lads than to have their prayers taken seriously like this. Their faith has been valued and validated.

I think this is a beautiful model of discipleship – in which an old man who has followed Jesus faithfully for years is genuinely open to the blessing of some starting out disciples, and the younger followers are strengthened in the wisdom and example of faith in the older disciple.

And for me as an in-between (sounds better than 'middle-aged') – not fresh and new on the discipleship path, but not yet old and wise – this has been a special sign for me too. Here in the midst, where the finish line looks a long way off, but I strain to remember how the first blazes of grace felt, I am grateful for the generations who are my bookends, keeping me from falling off the shelf.

How might these kinds of discipleship flourish in our communities and congregations?

- Perhaps your congregation could try some post it note prayers, exchanged between different ages in your community.
- A Post it note prayer for a family in your community ministries, such as playgroup or breakfast club could be a way of communicating your care for their circumstances.
- Keeping a record of how we have prayed creates an opportunity for God's faithfulness to be demonstrated, reflected upon and communicated. IT is a means for telling the story to the next generation.
- You may have developed another way of doing this. Share it with us too...