

Notes from “Could It Be Dementia?” by Louise Morse and Roger Hitchings

Practical ideas that are do-able

When the individual with dementia is still in church/being cared for at home:

- Bring together a support group
- Find out as much as possible about the person from their caregiver
- Give the caregiver the tel. nos. of those in the support group and their availability and indication of what they can help with
- Start with this as early as possible so that the person can develop relationships with all those concerned
- Need for sensitivity and understanding – things may take much longer
- Sit alongside the person in church – model how to relate to them so that others can too
- Consider organising special short services – don't forget the young people
- In conversation – don't worry if no reply. Speak with respect, speak clearly, look directly at them when you're talking. Don't be afraid to joke/laugh, don't worry about tears – comfort where possible – be natural
- In church pray publicly for sufferers and their caregivers- pray for their real needs, or peace of mind. Ask the Lord to be real to them.
- Pray for them as you would “normal” people, which is what they are – pray for true Christian experience
- Help to “bolt on” resources – churches are not expected to do things they are not skilled at doing
- Be a good friend – show real interest
- Maybe take along a pet – if the carer thinks it is a good idea
- Talk about normal things – their long term memory will be stronger than their short term memory
- Don't talk too loudly
- Don't argue or try and interject with your reality when they say illogical things
- Play music for them – a CD with hymns?

- Take them out for a walk
- Talk about Christ and the Bible – ‘Deep calls to deep...’
- Organise for them to take communion at home
- Pray for them and with them – encourage them to pray. Pray clearly and briefly.