

Book of Common Prayer could be key for Christian dementia sufferers

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By Aaron James

The Church of England has said the Book of Common Prayer could be crucial to helping dementia sufferers worship God.

It's speaking as it reviews its methods of ensuring people suffering from the disease, which can include a loss of memory, reasoning or language skills, are fully included in services.

It's thought 1.5 million people in the UK will be living with dementia by 2039.

Dementia is generally, but not exclusively, associated with old age. Some older people have the words from the Book of Common Prayer ingrained in their minds after years of repetition and can recall them with a clarity and understanding they may not have with other information.

It's hoped that this, as well as other methods such as multi-sensory services which include more pictures, sounds, tastes and objects to hold or feel, will help dementia sufferers.

The Church of England is also considering special services to mark people entering care homes - a significant change from a life of independence.

Bishop of Exeter Rt Revd Robert Atwell, who chairs the Liturgical Commission, told the Daily Telegraph: "Journeying alongside those living with dementia is a costly business, but hugely important in our society where dementia is on the increase.

"Many find that the familiar words of worship and the singing of hymns reach into confusion and unlock the gates of memory.

"As a Commission we are working in partnership with specialists in this area to encourage good practice and create resources for dementia-friendly services so that sufferers and carers alike can be assured of God's love and compassion."

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Book-of-Common-Prayer-could-be-key-for-Christian-dementia-sufferers>

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