



Grace Communion International Canada / Communion Internationale dans la Grâce, Canada OCT. 13, 2017

In conjunction with the September issue of Northern Light Digest, we feature articles on Christians and aging.

“Physical Exercise is of Value” 1 Timothy 4:8

The apostle Paul writes to Timothy reminding him that godliness has value for all things whereas physical training is only of some value. Nevertheless older adults obtain significant health benefits from regular physical activity. The Message – the Bible in Contemporary Language explains: “Exercise daily in God—no spiritual flabbiness, please! Workouts in the gymnasium are useful, but a disciplined life in God is far more so, making you fit both today and forever.”

Brisk walking (a little faster than usual) and working out with light weights are excellent ways to keep in shape. These type of exercises are usually called aerobic activity. Older adults benefit from at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity. Aerobic activity should be performed in bouts of at least 10 minutes duration.

Muscle-strengthening activities, involving major muscle groups, three days a week will bring benefit. Two 5 lb weights, one in each hand is usually sufficient to push above the head. Flexibility exercises stretch muscles helping the body to stay supple.

Well-researched evidence demonstrates that compared to less active men and women, older adults who are physically active have lower rates of coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, type 2 diabetes, colon cancer and breast cancer. A higher level of cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, healthier body mass and composition is also achieved. Active adults also have a lower risk of falling. Higher cognitive functions are welcome. Better quality sleep and reduced constipation are additional benefits.

An older lady explained to her friend: “my body had gotten totally out of shape so I got my doctor’s permission to join a fitness club and start exercising. I signed up for an aerobics class for Seniors. I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down, and perspired for 20 minutes. But, by the time I got my leotards on, the class was over!”

Here is the NIV translation of 1 Timothy 4:8 – “physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” Older adults often have the time to set a good example in godliness and being physically active. Let’s all follow the exhortation of Jesus: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all of your soul and with all of your mind and with all of your strength.” (Mark 12:30).

David A. Sheridan

David A. Sheridan is the pastor of Grace Communion Church, Calgary. He can be reached at david.sheridan@shaw.ca
