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Not just for Sundays

We are all aware of the need to provide extra support over the Christmas period to people who live alone, but you may be surprised to know that recent research indicates that older people are even more at risk of loneliness in the summer months. Perhaps this is because family and friends go away, regular social activities are suspended during August, and a sense of isolation is heightened over the long summer days.

So what can we do about it? Once we are aware that our older neighbours may feel particularly isolated at the time when many of us are enjoying our annual summer break in the sun, we can begin to think about ways of helping.

Holiday at Home is one of a number of church based initiatives to help meet the changing social, emotional and spiritual needs of people as they get older. The idea is that older people who are unable to get away can still enjoy the benefits of a holiday, but instead of going away they attend their local church for a few days for good food, social activities, entertainment and perhaps visits out to local places of interest. Hopefully they feel happy and refreshed at the end of week, but perhaps also through the friendship and spiritual support they find at church, they feel welcomed and encouraged to attend services or other church based activities.

Most people, no matter what their age, enjoy a holiday, whether that holiday is abroad or very close to home. And everyone, no matter what their age, is welcome at church, it is never too late to come along to church for the first time. Many people find that attending a social activity is a gentle way to engage or re-engage with their local church. As C.S Lewis said, 'You are never too old to set a new goal or dream a new dream'.

So if you would like to attend church, but feel nervous about going along on a Sunday, why not find out what else goes on there during the week? You may find more than you expected.