

## **A Book Review for individual and or small group reflection.**

**Elder's Rising: The Promise and Peril of Aging by: Roland D. Martinson**

**By P Wade Brinkopf, Saint Peter Lutheran Church, Shepherding Program**

### **Session 6**

This is our last session for "*Elders Rising: The Promise and Peril of Aging.*" The author of this book, Roland Martinson, has bravely and passionately spoken of his desire, and the need for a concerted effort to lift up elder programs outside of currently existing ones such as AARP and others. With the Baby Boomer agewave happening right now, and the dramatic improvements in medicine, it is of the utmost importance that we be proactive in the ways we engage with ourselves, and all those "Perennials" around us (1).

Roland writes about these opportunities this way. "Because the potential for such mission is reflected in the elder's stories and because elders are so deeply embedded in the life and ministry of their congregations, I propose Christian congregations and faith communities launch experimental Elder Corps, whose mission could include at least some of the following concepts.

- Think Tanks – Investigate and further develop realistic and hope-filled elder identities, lifestyles, and purposes. New models for elders serving could be imagined.
- Dialogue Tables – Gather intergenerational conversation partners to address common issues, such as elder poverty, affordable medical care, childcare, improved K-12 education models, funding lifelong learning, and balanced strategic intergenerational entitlements.
- Information Exchanges – Promote and cultivate expansive elder lifelong learning, ongoing reimagined careers, and flexible, shared work positions/responsibilities.
- Wellness and Wholeness Labs – Promote models of elder wellness and wholeness.
- Age – Specific Service Providers – Address the needs of late elders (age eighty-five plus) as well as the needs of young people.

The scripture and theology provide strong, comprehensive understandings of the values of elders and faith communities for pervasive spiritual and social bonds with elders. This means that congregations are well positioned to work together in ecumenical coalitions to launch Elder Corps units in their communities (2). These experimental Elder Corps units could begin organically and function locally, but as they proliferate and expand, these corps could link up with each other and with other champions of Elder Corps. Together, this loose network with shared purposes and a shared mission can help lead society as it rides the rising age wave." (Martinson 263-264)

1. How might Shepherd's better engage with our people? What are your thoughts?
2. Can we promote our Shepherd Program as an Elder Corps here at Saint Peter? And make improvements?
3. How can we better support and encourage you as a Shepherd?