

Dying and death

Christians on Ageing is interested in all the debates relating to end of life and, whilst it cannot speak for the Churches, is able to outline the arguments used by different sides in the debates so that members and friends can come to their own conclusions, informed by faith and conscience alike.

Two websites that have great resources about end of life issues are:



<http://www.dyingmatters.org/> **Dying Matters** – a coalition of 32,000 members across England and Wales which aims to help people talk more openly about dying, death and bereavement, and to make plans for the end of life.



The Art of Dying Well <http://www.artofdyingwell.org/> is a website from the Catholic Church in England and Wales aimed at helping people think about death and dying. It features real stories from dying people and their families, as well as interviews with palliative care experts.

The development of new ways of preserving life has been matched by new attitudes towards ending life. It is entirely possible now not only to extend life by the use of medicines and machinery but to offer people opportunities to take their own lives or to seek help from others in doing what they cannot do themselves. Some methods of caring for those with terminal illnesses can shorten life whilst at the same time bringing great relief from pain.

The issues confronted by society in general, including lawmakers, and the traditional arbiters of the moralities of human behaviour, including the Christian Churches, are not just confined to how people are kept alive or released from life, but how we, all of us, deal with the inevitability of death. When traditional customs, especially the

religious practices, associated with dying and death are no longer familiar or acceptable; when the presence of death is no longer a usual part of living; when the language about dying and death itself is changing to reflect people's lack of experience of its reality; when grieving and bereavement are kept hidden and are sometimes unwelcome in any overt expression – attitudes towards the end of life become a challenge to those who have distinct views about its meaning in the wider context of living and dying, and especially for those who include the possibility of life continuing after death in their systems of belief.

Christians on Ageing publishes booklets on the subject of dying and death which you will find in [Publications](#).