

INTRODUCTION

‘Dementia’ is a word that most people have heard and which provokes fear. Given that you have picked up this booklet it would seem reasonable to presume that you are worried about dementia, probably for a loved one, but possibly for yourself.

Few people properly understand dementia. It is in fact not a condition but a collection of symptoms resulting from many different causes, some treatable and some not. A diagnosis of dementia usually comes as a shock, even if you have been expecting it, and it is a worrying and upsetting time for the person with dementia and everyone close.

I am a neuropsychologist and also a Christian. My job includes completing pen and paper tests, often called a cognitive assessment, to see if someone has dementia. I have also been involved in supporting families and helping them to come to terms with the diagnosis of dementia. In this booklet I want to help you in the following four practical and spiritual areas:

- To give a brief overview of the facts about dementia
- To give you practical tips that will make the next few years a little easier for everyone
- To help you get the support you need from your church
- To remind and encourage you that God knows and understands your distress and will give you the wisdom you need without finding fault (James 1:5).

In this booklet you will find advice on the following topics:

- I am worried about dementia but don't have a diagnosis
- What is dementia?
- Types and causes of dementia
- Treatment for dementia
- My relative has just been diagnosed
- What do I need to do now?
- Living with dementia

Help! Someone I love has dementia

- Caring for yourself
- Why is God allowing this?

Most importantly, I want to encourage you that

in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

(Romans 8:28)

Thus, if you are a Bible-believing Christian, this verse assures you that God will use all things that happen to you for your good. The ‘all’ of this verse includes dementia. This can be hard to accept. It is easy to believe that ‘all things’ are working for our good when they are going well; it is harder when something bad happens—but the promise is equally true.