

## Seniors Getting It Done

John Glenn made history on this day in 1998 when he became the oldest person to travel in space. Glenn had been a Marine Corps pilot who served in World War II and the Korean War. In 1959, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration selected him to be part of its first group of astronauts. Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth in 1962.

Glenn resigned from the astronaut program in 1964 to pursue a career in private business. He also worked as a consultant for NASA and served four terms as a senator from Ohio. During the late 1990s, Glenn lobbied NASA for the chance to travel in space again. NASA accepted his offer to take part in detailed experiments concerning the aging process. At age 77, John Glenn served as payload specialist on the space shuttle Discovery.

Just because someone is in an age category our society has labeled “senior citizens” doesn’t mean he or she should be put on a shelf, or cannot be useful or effective. Remember Caleb in the Old Testament? He was one of the two men who spied out Canaan and brought back to the wandering Israelites a good report. The Israelites, however, believed the other 10 men – the majority opinion – who had delivered a frightening, negative account of what they had seen, so they were afraid to enter the Promised Land. But 45 years later, when God finally allowed their descendants to claim it, Caleb said to Joshua, who succeeded Moses, “Today I am 85 years old. I am as strong now as I was when Moses sent me on that journey, and I can still travel and fight as well as I could then” (Joshua 14:10-11). Caleb was ready to seize his inheritance in the hill country where the formidable Anakites lived.

We cannot stop our bodies from physically aging, but our spirits are ageless. We can maintain a vibrant ministry (and that’s what our work in Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home is) and be used by God in our later years if we follow Caleb’s formula, which the Scriptures mention several times: “He wholeheartedly followed the Lord” (Joshua 14:14). We should also recognize that our residents still have much to contribute. Every time I am in one of our centers, I go out blessed by my interaction with them.

--Beecher Hunter