

## Ask the right questions to get the answer you need

By Rev Kathryn Walters



When I was in my late 30's my father (now deceased) suddenly took over buying my birthday presents. One of the presents was a 12volt cordless drill. I was in heaven... Oh the things I repaired built and occasionally destroyed! I love my drill.

It has stood by me for nearly 18 years. Its battery is a little tired now. It doesn't last as long as it used to. The power is a little weaker than what I often need for certain jobs. It's not quite ready for retirement but it does need to be replaced.

Recently Viv and I decided to build a deck and we were in our favourite shop (Mega Mitre 10) gathering all the materials we would need. I turned to Viv and said "we need a new drill—an 18 volt one that will do the job. My old one simply won't cut it anymore." With a heavy sigh Viv said "Oh thank goodness, I didn't want to say anything because I knew how much you loved that drill your dad gave you." "Why didn't you say anything?" I asked. Her reply was something along the lines of "Well, I just assumed you wouldn't want to replace it."

This got me to thinking... how many times do we fail to ask the hard questions. How many times do we keep doing things in the same way because we are uncertain or afraid of upsetting someone. How many lost opportunities have there been because of this? What are the ideas or ministries that are not being given a fair go because resources are being used to maintain something from the past that no longer works well? Often it's about how things are asked that upset people—not what is asked...

Needless to say we now have a brand new cordless drill with 2 batteries and a whole set of fancy attachments we can add to as new jobs might mean new tools! (Flash eh?)



Our deck has now been built (thanks to cousin Bruce and his skill & guidance.) And every now and then, when I'm in the garage, I look at the new drill and dream of all sorts of things that I ... oops I mean "we" can now do.

Are there things in your parish that have served you well (and therefore celebrated) but not doing the job like they need to anymore? Are there hard questions you are avoiding? Are those questions—the right questions?

I few weeks ago I attended a Te Raranga group and one of the ministers there shared the story about Kodak. Kodak was once the leader in cameras and film—a multi-billion dollar company. But in the 90's film sales plummeted with the arrival of digital cameras. The question they asked themselves was "How can we sell more film?". What they should have asked is "What is the future of photography, what will it look like?" The result was this multi-billion dollar company filed for bankruptcy in 2012. The questions you ask in your parish—are they the sort that are "future building" questions or are you supporting ideas that no longer work well ?