

Preparing for Baby's Arrival

Congratulations on the exciting stage of life you've entered. Whether you've recently had a new baby or counting down to your due date, you've likely noticed that parenthood is an entirely different world. In the midst of all the joy and anticipation comes a whole new level of stretching (not just your belly) and character development. You may be wondering if life will ever be the same. In many ways it won't. So, become intentional about this season by preparing yourself to take three important steps for the transition to parenthood.

STEP ONE: Buckle up

As new parents, you've strapped yourself into a roller coaster of adventure—with highs you could have never imagined and lows that can push you to discover abilities and courage you didn't know you had. Along with God's blessing of children comes His calling for you to lay your life down for your child (Philippians 2:3-11). Things you once took for granted—like sleep, eating a warm meal or a spontaneous get-away with your spouse—are now things you will often sacrifice. While your friends without children sleep in on Saturday morning or hang out at the local Starbucks, you will be taking on what one sociologist called the “bone-wearying” work of a parent.

STEP TWO: Give Up

When you give sacrificially as parents you probably won't get the same kudos you'd get in the workplace, or even the same recognition you would have given each other for similar efforts before the kids arrived. You're moving into a time of life where such sacrificial giving is just something you have to do often and without expecting much fanfare. But it's in this aspect of your new mission — losing your life — that you find your life (Matthew 16:24-25). It's here that you develop “servant muscles” through the ongoing exercise of selfless giving. You'll also find that parenting is an arena for Christian discipleship with a “daily-ness” and intensity like none other.

STEP THREE: Study Up

This is a BIG DEAL. Honestly, aside from choosing to follow Christ and choosing who you will marry, having children is one of the biggest decisions you can take in life. As such, it makes sense to be as prepared as you can be. You will find a list of recommended resources on the back of this page, but don't view this as exhaustive. Ask friends, family, and others you trust for their best recommendations. Sit down and interview parents you respect. Ask them their best advice. Most are humble enough not to give advice unless asked, but really do want to help. Take this time as an opportunity to study Christian resources, other parents, and certainly Scripture itself to find godly principles to guide you in your new parenting adventure.

STEP FOUR: Team Up

A couple entering into the journey of parenthood usually discover a sense of purpose and shared accomplishment that can push their relationship into greater joy. But they can simultaneously drive each other crazy. Adjusting to less sleep, sex, money and time for each other can be a blow to marital satisfaction. Worse still, couples that need each other the most often find themselves taking their frustration out on the only other adult in the house. Your marriage can survive this adjustment and you can experience the joy of parenting if you choose to be a team—if you lay your lives down for each other (Ephesians 5:22-33) and give each other an extra measure of love (1 Corinthians 13:4-8) and grace (2 Corinthians 9:8).

Speaking of teaming up, finding other couples who are in the same stage of life as you is vitally important. Parenting is a task you don't want to tackle on your own. Surround yourself with godly couples who will encourage you, challenge you, and support you through the child-rearing years.

GOING FURTHER – Resources

Recommended Books (Available @ The Porch or CCC Library)

Your Marriage Can Survive a Newborn (by psychologist Glenn Williams and occupational therapist Natalie Williams) helps couples thrive during the stress and strain of having a newborn. With chapters about anxiety, expectations, money, sex and fun, the Williams' speak from their own experience of having three children, as well as from the stories of other overextended parents, to show couples how to nurture their relationship even as they nurture their new baby.

Shepherding a Child's Heart (Tedd Tripp) draws from seasoned experience as a father – and from God's Holy Word. Grounded in the Bible's divine plan for parenting, this guide defines your goals as a parent and provides the Scriptural methods for accomplishing them.

The Blessing (John Trent & Gary Smalley) explains how the biblical gift of "the blessing" is the key to a child's self-worth and emotional well-being. This is a great book to read as you prepare for the adventure of raising godly children.

Parenting is Heart Work (Scott Turansky and JoAnne Miller) aims to help parents learn to reach their child's heart to teach, train, and build a tremendous relationship with them, rather than just disciplining for corrective behavior.

GOING FURTHER – CCC Support

For more information regarding resources and relationships available for you as a new parent, please contact our Family Life Minister, Joe Wisley, at jwisley@conversechurch.org or our Children's Minister, Megan McGarvey, at mmcgarvey@conversechurch.org.

HomePointe.org

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