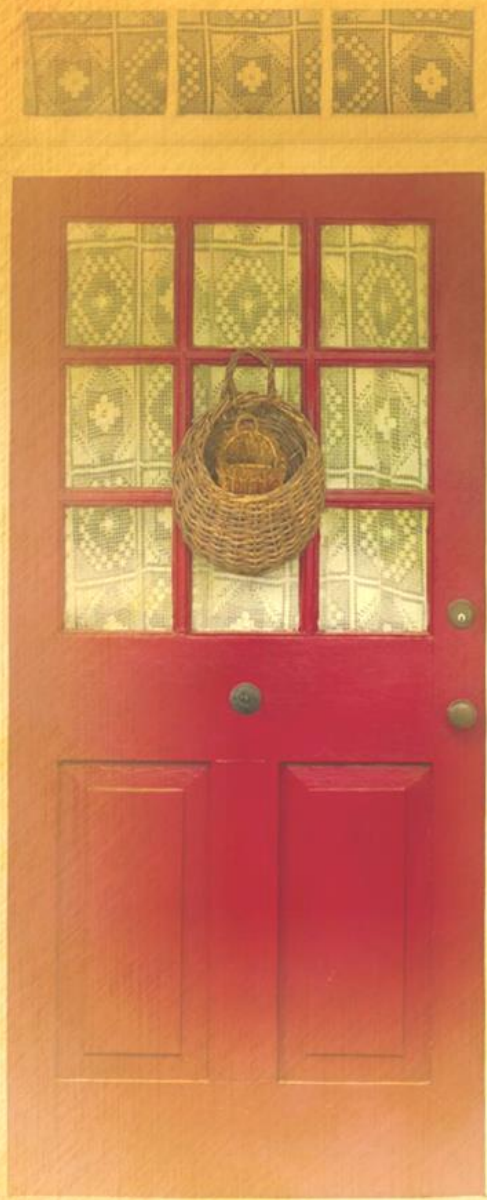


Preparing For Baby



HomePointe[™]
Pointers

Preparing for Baby's Arrival

*From Greg Ziegler, Family Minister
With Kurt Bruner, The Center for Strong Families*

Congratulations on the exciting stage of life you've entered. Whether you've recently had a new baby or are 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 never have 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: 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, despite needing each other for help and support, couples 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).

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Book:

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. (Available in the HomePointe Center & church library.)

Recommended Website: The “Having a Baby” topic on ***TroubledWith.com*** provides encouragement and insights about making the transition from just the two of you to a “three-family.” It includes practical advice for the pregnant season as well as information about what life will be like once the baby arrives.

GOING FURTHER – Church Support

Both our **Young Adults** ministry and **HomeBuilders**, who meet in The Lodge, are great support groups with concentration periodically on a host of family related issues. Greg Ziegler, Jeff Hernandez, Max Koonce and others would be glad to help you become part of these fellowship groups built to share challenges and encourage one another in love.

Small Groups

Our Small Groups meet throughout the school year on the 1st and 3rd Sunday evenings of each month. Some groups meet more often, and some choose different days and times to meet. If you are not part of one of our small groups, we would like to invite you to join one soon. The groups are integral to our system of pastoral care and service. Contact our Lead Minister, Josh Bundy, to find out more about small groups. If you would like to join a group, please see Chad Graham.

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