



Preparing for Baby's Arrival

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Adapted by Greenville Oaks Church of Christ*

You've seen the sonogram, heard the heartbeat and circled the due date. Congrats! You're about to become a parent. Now what?

You may be wondering if life will ever be the same. Rest assured that in many ways, it won't. Parenthood is an entirely different world. In the midst of all the joy and anticipation comes a whole new level of emotional stretching and character development. These four important steps can ease the transition to parenthood:

STEP ONE: Buckle Up

Most hospitals won't let you take your newborn home without an approved car seat that keeps the infant snugly buckled and safe. Every time you buckle your baby into the vehicle, remember that you have a responsibility to buckle-up spiritually as well.

Parenthood will bring highs you never imagined and lows that can push you to discover abilities you didn't know you had. You will lose some freedom, but parenthood can be the best ride of your life.

STEP TWO: Give Up

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 (Philippians 2:3-11). 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've given each other for similar efforts before the kids arrived.

It's in this aspect of your new mission — losing your life — that you find your life (Matthew 16:24-25). You'll also find that parenting is an arena for daily Christian discipleship with an intensity like no other.

STEP THREE: Team Up

Having a baby is like setting off an explosion in your marriage. The shared sense of purpose can bring spouses closer together in some ways, but farther apart in others.

Adjusting to less sleep, sex, money and time for each other can be a blow to marital satisfaction. Your marriage can survive this adjustment 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).

STEP FOUR: Grow Up

You might not feel ready to become a parent. It's okay. No one is ready. That's because God isn't done with you yet.

You're still growing up, still maturing, and still learning. Becoming a parent doesn't mean you'll have it all together. There is extraordinary pressure on Christian parents to raise a certain kind of ideal family, but eventually we come to see that the concept of perfection is an illusion.



While you shouldn't foster idealistic expectations, new parents should definitely embrace the maturity that parenthood requires. In 1 Corinthians 13:11, we read: *When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.*

Pray for God to give you grace and wisdom as you prepare for your new baby. By God's grace, you are able to grow in maturity, even as you experience failures and successes in parenting your children.

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Book:

Available for checkout at the Faith@Home Center or for purchase online.

Your Marriage Can Survive a Newborn (by psychologist Glenn Williams and occupational therapist Natalie Williams) is not about parenting a newborn; it's about helping your relationship grow and survive during what some parents describe as one of the most challenging yet rewarding times of their lives.

GOING FURTHER - Church Support

Mom-To-Mom

Mom-To-Mom is a group that encourages, equips, and energizes mothers with young children. Young mothers meet regularly at Greenville Oaks to share in a time of practical, biblically-based teaching, receive supportive advice and encouragement in small groups led by "mentor moms." Childcare is provided, but registration is required. For more information, call the Greenville Oaks church office at 972-727-2359 or email info@greenvilleoaks.org.

Pastoral Care

Greenville Oaks Shepherds and Ministers are here for you. Email info@greenvilleoaks.org and ask to be contacted by a Shepherd or Minister.