

## GOING FURTHER - RESOURCES

### RECOMMENDED BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM THE FAITH @ HOME CENTER

▶ ***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

## GOING FURTHER - CHURCH SUPPORT

▶ ***Life Groups:*** Authentic Christian community and mentoring is available through Riverview's Life Group ministry. Contact our Life Groups pastor Michael Beene at Michael@rbclake.org for more info.

▶ ***Pastoral Counseling:*** Pastors are available to counsel those who would like more Godly wisdom on this issue. Please call the church office for more info: 573-348-3515

# PREPARING FOR BABY

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BAPTIST CHURCH

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# 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 down your life for your child (Philippians 2:3-11). Being married teaches us to die to ourselves on one level, but having children calls us to an entirely new level of dying to ourselves. 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 “dailyness” 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, 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). Here are 4 things to consider as you prepare for the arrival of a child.

- 1. *Keep an eternal perspective***-- Many times, the first 6 months of a new child's arrival are the hardest and most chaotic. Babies change and grow very quickly. A few months, in the light of eternity is a short time to endure a trying situation.
- 2. *Continue to date your spouse***—as soon as you and your spouse are comfortable trusting the child with a family member or baby-sitter... go on a date! Schedule “date-nights” regularly—aim for one per month.
- 3. *Seek time to pray together***. Before you pray, share something you want your spouse to pray for you about. Pray for your new child together.
- 4. *Build a support network and use it***. Bringing a new life into the world is a bigger undertaking than words can express. The old adage rings true that “it takes a village to raise a child.” Share with your church body if you are experiencing a difficult time. Ask supportive extended family for help. Seek marriage or parenting tips and advice from other godly couples. We aren't meant to live life alone, or raise kids alone.