

Recommended Websites: 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.

Hearts-at-home.org A great resource for moms! The national Hearts-at-Home conference takes place each spring in Normal, IL, our backyard! Through the year, the website is a good source of information and encouragement. Jill Savage's blog is also a great read.

GOING FURTHER – Church Support

If you're not already part of a small group, consider joining one! Getting to know others who are in a similar phase of life, sharing thoughts and feelings, developing friendships, and seeking God's wisdom together in a supportive environment can be really helpful in deepening your faith.

One small group designed specifically for families with children at home is 1st and 3rd Families. Family dinner and childcare are a part of the evening, as well as time for adult-only discussion. Topics discussed range from parenting, to marriage and spiritual growth. See Pastor Herb or Adrienne Olson if you'd like to get connected with a small group as you enter this new phase of life.

Preparing For Baby



HomePointe
Pointers

Preparing for Baby's Arrival

*From the staff at Mattis Avenue Free Methodist Church
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 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 "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).

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Books:

(*Available for check out in 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.

Professionalizing Motherhood (by Jill Savage)* "Just a mom?" There's no such thing. Motherhood isn't a second-rate occupation. It's a career that can maximize your talents and strengths to the fullest. *Professionalizing Motherhood* casts a fresh and meaningful vision for mothering as a worthy career choice for this season of your life.