

GOING FURTHER

VALLEYDALE SUPPORT

Preschool Ministry & Early Learning Center

Valleydale offers a variety of programs to support families with infants, toddlers and preschoolers. From Sunday morning and Wednesday night programs during service times to the weekday Valleydale Early Learning Center to a one-time Parent/Child dedication and more. For more information, contact Hannah Braswell at hbraswell@valleydale.org.

Stephen Ministry

This ministry is intended to match you with someone who has a similar life experience but is a little further along for the purpose of perspective, understanding and hope. You will be matched with a carefully selected church member who is supervised by the church and works in strict confidence. To learn more about this ministry, contact the ministry coordinator for a confidential conversation at 205.991.5282.

Life Groups

Valleydale offers a variety of Adult Life Groups that offer support. For more information go to www.valleydale.org/lifegroups and click on the "Find a Life Group" link or stop by the Next Steps Desk in the lobby to learn which group might be a fit for you.

Faith Path

This free kit is available for download or pick-up from the campus resource center. It includes special tools to help navigate the spiritual development of your new child.

For more
resources, visit
valleydale.org/family
OR
visit our resource
center in the
lobby

Preparing

FOR BABY



PREPARING FOR BABY'S ARRIVAL

Congratulations on this exciting stage of life! Whether you've recently had a new baby, are counting down to your due date or preparing to adopt, 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 and character development. You may be wondering if life will ever be the same. In many ways it won't. It will become more fulfilling, more challenging and expensive than ever before as you pour your time, talents and resources into an investment that will yield amazing dividends! Those blessed with the gift of children are called to inspire and nurture the faith of the next generation as life's greatest privilege and priority.

So, become intentional about this season by preparing yourself to take four important steps for the transition to parenthood.

STEP ONE

Pray Up

As you embark on this incredible season, begin to set the tone of your parenting by seeking the Lord in prayer. The task of parenting can often seem overwhelming but remember that if God has called you to it, He will equip you for it! Seek Him for wisdom and cover your child in prayer through each stage.

STEP TWO

Buckle Up

As new parents, you are starting on 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). You will sacrifice things you once took for granted, like sleeping in or a spontaneous get-away with your spouse. It is a sacrifice worth making.

STEP THREE

Give Up

When you give sacrificially as parents you probably won't get the same kudos you would 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 without expecting much fanfare. 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 find that parenting is an arena for Christian discipleship with a “*dailyness*” and intensity like none other.

STEP FOUR

Team Up

Most couples entering into parenthood discover a sense of shared purpose and accomplishment that pushes their relationship into a greater sense of partnership and joy. They may also face relational strains. Adjusting to less sleep, sex, money, and time for each other can bring a short-term dip to marital satisfaction. 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 experience the joy of parenting if you remain a team. 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). Commit to working together and continuing to “*date*” even if it is after you have put your baby to bed to meet on the couch for a time to connect.

GOING FURTHER

RESOURCES

My Faith Box by Lydia Randall

Expectant Parents by Suzanne Hadley Gosselin

The Christian Mama's Guide to Having a Baby by Erin MacPherson

Expecting by Marla Taviano

And Baby Makes Three by John Gottman & Julie Schwartz Gottman

Praying Through Your Pregnancy by Jennifer Polimino & Carolyn Warren