

Making decisions about Family Size

Author : Hindsfeet

Published: September 9, 2010, 3:41 pm

Why we allow God to plan our family size (Allow? Allow God? Who am I to allow God?)

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Proverbs 3:5, 6

Sometimes people ask me what scripture we base our family size on.

I think they expect me to quote verses like

"Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate." - Psalm 127:3-5

Or to quote all the "Be fruitful and multiply" verses.

Or they expect me to recant how, throughout the Bible, God considers children a blessing to be desired (in the stories of Abraham & Sarah... of Isaac & Rebecca... of Rachel & Leah... of Hannah)

But for us it was not only what we found in scripture, but in looking at God's original perfect design. He did not create birth control. He made us to *naturally* have many babies. There was a study last year that showed our bodies actually do not do well menstruating month after month, because they were not intended to do that. They were created to have babies.

Generations were intended to overlap - Families were meant to be a seamless garment. God did not create The Generation Gap... humans did. Now that our children have an age span of 16 months to 19 years, I see clearly how God intended that in His creation the older children would come along side the aging parents and "fill in the gap"... that older children would grow comfortable with babies before moving on to have their own babies. That the younger children would grow comfortable with nieces and nephews before moving on to have their own babies...

It was an incredible feeling -- to feel the immense relief and joy we felt when we fully gave it all over to God. I never thought there would be such freedom when we let go of the "should we have more, shouldn't we have more children" decision, and gave it over to God. It was such a relief to let go of it, and let Someone far wiser take over.

God's plans are perfect... Baby after baby I have seen how perfect those plans are. It fills one with peace to know that there is an entire Bible full of all those scriptures that illuminate it as His perfect and flawless plan.

He created our fallopian tubes... how could I go and cut them and tie them? Are there any other parts of our body that we decide to go and *make them* stop working? Why would I mess with His design when His design is perfect? He is not going to let me give birth to any people He doesn't want existing... why would I

take that power onto myself? WHO am I to tell Him who is necessary or unnecessary on this earth? He knows far better than I do! He sees the past, present and future. He knows the plans He has set out. It just seems crazy for me to want to interfere with my limited vision.

No, pregnancy is not easy. I have had hyperemesis gravidarum so bad I have been dangerously dehydrated and lost 36 lbs. during pregnancy. I have had a few miscarriages that I have grieved. I have had gestational diabetes, and pre-eclampsia. I was told to abort Sarah to save my own life. Nevertheless, these experiences have only been opportunities for God to show me His grace! If we have life so perfect, why would we need God?

Both Elisabeth and Rebecca are my right hand women. If I am sick with morning sickness, or recovering with much pain from a cesarean section, I do not even have to say a word, but my big girls take over, cook dinner and get babies to bed! I will be lying down thinking "I need to get up and start something in the kitchen" and when I arrive in the kitchen, dinner is already started! My children are such an immense blessing! It is not just words to say, "Children are a blessing"... they actually are!

When they are all young it is easy to lose sight that we'll reap rewards for our efforts. A 2, 3, 4, 5 year old can be such a tyrant/mess maker/whiner! Yet as they get older, the family unit works together so that the burden is lighter. The joys are multiplied, the burdens are divided. You have multiple people who think your baby is just as cute as you think she is. You have multiple people who see the toddler do something cute, and laugh with you for days afterwards. You have multiple people to make sure the 4 year old does not make a huge toothpaste mess while brushing her teeth. You have multiple people to keep an eye on the babies during naptime so you can go for a swim or take a nap yourself. You have multiple people to help fold laundry, clear the dinner table, weed the garden, and, not only does it make less work, but it makes the work that there is far more enjoyable.

People ask, "When you have so many children how do you make sure they get enough attention?" Are you kidding? Do you know how many hugs and kisses are lavished on people in this house? I can guarantee you that my two year old gets far more hugs and lops and boo-boos kissed and books read to her at home in a large family than she would have, had I not had her siblings and had I instead put her in a daycare, and went off to work. You really do not need to worry about my children getting enough attention. Not only do they have a mom at home with ready arms, they have six playmates and friends who have learned how to co-exist peacefully!

I planted a small garden this year... Sarah and Hannah seize any weed that dares come up. Emma and Sarah are both eager to water at the slightest sign of wilt... mostly so they can get each other wet, but hey, the plants benefit. Together we sat eagerly waiting with our toast and mayo, waiting for those tomatoes to be just right for our first tomato sandwich of the season.

My older kids reinforce good character in the younger ones... the burden does not all fall on us as parents. They reinforce by example, they reinforce by telling the stories of the consequences they suffered when they made a bad decision, they reinforce by knowing the rules of this house, and gently guiding the younger siblings with "Papa said..." or "Mama said..."

The older ones include the younger ones in baking bread, in playing games, in doing hair, in holding baby chicks. They comfort them when they are sad. They read stories to them. Though I may feel stretched mothering such a large span of ages that have different needs and different appointments here and there... In other things, my burden is much lighter. I often look at my children interacting together, the older heads bent down beside the younger ones, and I feel so full to bursting, so immensely blessed, so incredibly rich... with blessings pressed down, shaken together, and spilling over... even with awful morning sickness, miscarriages, high risk pregnancies due to several health issues and living with multiple sclerosis... The shadows of those

"sufferings" pale by far in the Light of His Grace.