**Longing, Loss & Life: Infertility & Women’s Ministry**

By [Chris Adams](http://www.lifeway.com/womensministry/author/chrisadams/)

We deal with many issues and crises of women in women’s ministry. One that has plagued our communities is infertility. Perhaps you have experienced it yourself. I did.  But it was what God used in my young married adult life to bring me into a deeper walk and total recommitment of my life to Him and His plans. For the first time, I learned what it means to totally trust God with something I couldn’t change…and to trust His ways, even if it meant I’d never have children. I am very grateful that He blessed us with the most wonderful adoption experience when we became parents of twin girls.

According to the [National Infertility Association](http://www.resolve.org/), infertility is defined as a “Disease or condition of the reproductive system often diagnosed after a couple has had one year of unprotected, well-timed sex, or if the woman has been unable to carry a pregnancy that results in a live birth".

How do we help women in our church and our community who are struggling with all of the emotions and disappointments that often accompany infertility?

**Issues to consider:**
1.    How it feels for a woman experiencing infertility to be around pregnant women.
2.    How she can be confused by wanting to be happy for pregnant women but at the same time feels jealousy.
3.    How she wonders why she can’t be the one who is pregnant.

**Try to understand:**
1.    Every childless woman you encounter may not be so by choice.
2.    Infertile women often experience silent grief.
3.    The experience of infertility can be all-consuming. (And we often think EVERYBODY but me is pregnant!)
4.    Sometimes the church can be a painful place because it is so family oriented. Mother’s Day can be especially difficult.

**What to do:**
1.    Encourage honesty: let her vent or cry if she needs to. Encourage her to ask God the hard questions she is facing. There were days I needed to just let God know I was hurting even though I trusted His heart.
2.    Commit to pray for and with her: help her continue to trust God.
3.    Be sensitive with conversation: don’t avoid talking about children, just keep in mind the heart of women who are in pain.
4.    Be willing to listen: take time to stop and really listen to her heart.
5.    Help her find a place to serve: not necessarily with children, but pray with her about where God wants her to serve. I chose to serve with children while I was dealing with this, but for others it might be too hard.
6. Start a support group: you will probably find many others like her in your church. They can journey together.   When I was dealing with infertility, we didn’t talk about it much in the church and we had no support groups to help women deal with it. See this helpful article: [Steps to Leading an Infertility Support Group](http://www.lifeway.com/article/150611/)
7. Provide resources on infertility: know what is available in your community and provide that information along with reading material.
8. Connect her with an older women or a couple without children: help her see that God has a plan all women, regardless of whether they have children or not. She will see the joy is found in Christ alone as she sees a childless woman walking with and serving the Lord faithfully.

How are you ministering to women dealing with infertility in your church?

 **Other Helpful Resources:**

[The Missing Peace: Coping with Infertility Devotional Guide](http://www.lifeway.com/article/150630/) by [Leighann McCoy](http://sisterpastor.blogspot.com/)

[13 Keys to Ministering to Infertile Couples](http://www.lifeway.com/article/159675/) By [Rhonda Kelley](http://www.nobts.edu/Faculty/ItoR/KelleyRH/Default.html)

See our recent [live webcast](http://www.lifeway.com/article/168761/)  on the topic of infertility, miscarriage and adoption: scroll down to June 8.