

# ROOM at your TABLE



## EXPLORING ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE

### Week 2

#### **Making Basic Decisions**

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts, and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the the everlasting way."*

*-Psalm 139:23-24*

#### **A. Prayer**

1. Just like any other important endeavor, perspective is everything.
2. Correct perspective comes as we encounter God through His Word and through prayer.

#### **B. Undergo a Self-Assessment**

1. Ask God to make your desires and motives clear to you.
2. Doing great things for the right reasons requires asking the right questions.
  - What are my fears?
  - Where are you in the grieving process related to infertility or loss of a child?
  - Is my motivation to "love" or to "fix" a child?
3. What are you afraid of?
  - Why?
    - Why?
    - Why?

**Diving Deeper:** For more on this, listen to the inspiring story of former foster youth, Josh Shipp, on the Foster Movement Podcast, episode 5: (<https://cafo.org/podcast/episode-5-power-one-caring-adult/>)

## C. Seek Wise Counsel

*Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed.*  
-Proverbs 15:22

1. Seek wise counsel from those with experience in adoption and foster care
  - Adoptive/foster parents
  - Professionals in child welfare
  - Adoptees/former foster youth
  
2. Remember, not all advice is godly advice  
*Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?*  
-Job 38:2
  
5. Key questions regarding counsel and other voices you encounter:
  - Do our primary counselors exhibit a close walk with God and good decision-making in their own lives?
  - Are our primary counselors in a position to be completely honest in their advice?
  - To what degree should our family's response (immediate and extended) affect our decision?
  - Do we have a supportive group of people in our family, our church, and among friends?
  - What is the most valid objection that we've encountered regarding our decision? Have we sufficiently addressed it?

## E. The Most Important Decision

1. Through prayer, self-assessment, gathering information, and seeking counsel, you are in a better position to answer:
  - Should we adopt?
  - Where should we adopt from?
  - Whom should we adopt?
  
2. As those answers become clear, all of your questions will fade away and only one will remain:  
**When God's will for us becomes clear, will we be ready to obey?**
  
3. A decision to adopt should always occur as a decision to obey God. A decision to adopt should never be:

- A decision to fulfill my dreams
- A decision to appease my spouse
- A decision to fill a perceived need in my life
- A decision to live a life of greater purpose
- A decision to rescue a hurting child

## Evaluating Adoption Agencies

### A. Agency Selection

The five key characteristics you want to look for in an agency are:

- Personal Fit
- Experience
- Integrity
- Professionalism

### B. How to Gather Information About Agencies

1. Talk to other parents and professionals in the field (if you don't know any, now's the time to start)
2. Interview the agency (see questions at end of this session)
3. Gather information online (Facebook groups, reviews, etc)
  - When reading online reviews, remember that adoption and foster care is an emotional endeavor and that there are two sides to every story. What you're looking for is a pattern of feedback rather than making a decision based on a few "bad" reviews.
4. Check to make sure they have the correct licenses

### C. Your Expectations

1. You should expect professional and respectful services.
2. You should receive a printed fee schedule (for international and private adoption).
3. You should expect the agency to differentiate between agency policy and legal requirements.
4. Your Christian worldview should be respected.
5. You should receive timely updates regarding your placement.
6. The agency should demonstrate professional experience

7. The agency should respond to your concerns and take action as necessary.
8. Your agency should have a "child first" mentality
9. Your agency should provide great training

### **C. Agency Expectations**

1. You should read all contracts, handbooks, and program packets before calling your agency for help.
2. Your paperwork should be submitted in a timely fashion.
3. You should commit to attending all trainings with a teachable spirit.
4. You should work with only one agency at a time.
5. You should be available to travel (if necessary) on short notice.

### **D. Handling Difficulties**

1. Expect some difficulties.
2. Recognize that many difficulties are out of the agency's control.
3. Avoid difficulties by reading all documents and contracts carefully before signing.
4. Handle conflict Biblically.

## **Paperwork and Homestudy**

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.*  
-Colossians 3:23

### **A. Paperwork**

1. Agencies require you to fill out so many pieces of paperwork to make sure children are safe.
2. Take things one piece of paper at a time, but be diligent to move forward.
3. Give the ball to the one that runs with it best.

#### 4. Types of paperwork

- Homestudy
- Birth Certificates
- IRS Form 1040
- Bank Statements
- Letter from your physicians stating good health
- Recommendations/references
- USCIS Form I-600 or I-600A (international)
- DMV records
- Background check/fingerprinting
- TB test

## **B. Homestudy**

### 1. Purpose

- The home study helps inform you about the adoption process.
- The home study makes sure your home meets the state's requirements for adoptive families.
- The home study helps ensure yours is the right home for the child in need.

### 2. Process

- In most cases, the home study can be completed in about two months, though many factors, some of which are out of your control, may delay its completion.
- Home studies can be free when you are adopting from the state, and can range from approximately \$500 to \$3,000 when done through private agencies.
- For international adoptions, make sure the agency conducting your home study is acceptable to the country from which you are adopting.
- For interstate adoptions, make sure the agency conducting your home study is acceptable to the state from which you are adopting.
- Request from your agency a list of what will be included in the home study.
- From your agency's list, compile a to-do list of items you need to help prepare your home.
- You may be asked very personal questions about such matters as your employment history, finances, marriage, parenting style, leisure activities, and expectations for your adoption.
- The social worker may visit with each member of the adoptive family individually.