

FOREWORD

This is definitely not just another book on prayer. *Expecting A Miracle* has been designed with a very specific purpose in mind. It has been written specifically for expectant parents to assist them as they pray for their unborn child. Growing up in a Christ-centered home, I was always taught the importance of praying. However, as a pastor I have realized that while we, as Christians, stress the importance of prayer, we do a poor job teaching individuals how to pray. When my wife, Lesli, and I found out we were expecting our first child, we knew that we needed to do all the praying we could. We wanted to pray for our little one, but after the formalities of praying for good health, strength, and wisdom we found ourselves fumbling for what to say. It seemed as if we were merely repeating the same request over and over again. While we knew that we needed to pray, we were at a loss as to how to go about it, and what to pray for. What we needed was some direction, a guideline to help us through this process. I realize that most Christians are afraid to admit these feelings. Somehow they feel that it is a sign of a weak faith; or, somehow makes them less of a Christian. However, our willingness to admit that we need help in prayer puts us in pretty good company. When given the chance to ask Jesus any question they wanted, the disciples did not ask Him to teach them how to preach, or how to heal, or even how to walk on water. They ask Jesus to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1-4). D. L. Moody echoed these sentiments when he said, "I'd rather be able to pray than be a great preacher; Jesus Christ never taught His disciples how to preach, but only how to pray." The truth of the matter is, all of us are inadequate in our prayer lives and could use a little help, and guidance to help us grow. This book will do just that. It will enhance your prayer life, and enable you to pass on the discipline of a productive prayer to your child. As parents who are now expecting our second child, it is a blessing to finally have a tool to aide us in our daily prayer time. An instrument that takes us beyond the "God bless our baby" to specific needs and requests as our baby develops and grows within Lesli's womb. In his book, Todd has laid out a plan to assist parents in the daunting task of praying daily for their new arrival. He has an easy, free flowing approach that is a wonderful starting point to assist all parents in their prayer lives. He gives down to earth guidance on how to use prayer to prepare for your child's development and arrival. He uses a style that makes it easy to integrate praying for your unborn child into your daily life. You will find the scripture references coming to life as you ponder the precious life that is developing within your or your mate's womb. Each of the daily prayers will serve as a guide as you begin your daily prayer time. You will find yourself recalling them throughout the day each time you think of the miracle taking place as your baby develops. The medical information is helpful in providing you a daily update on the changes that are taking place in your body. Make sure to take advantage of the journaling space that is provided to add your own reflections, thoughts, and even the worries that might come to mind as you reflect on the precious gift that God is creating for you. My prayer is that this book will bless and strengthen your prayer life. That it will assist you in preparing for this life changing miracle. And generally speaking, that it will aide you in how to pray for your child. I know that God will enrich your life and bless you as you wait expectantly upon His miracle.

In Christ's love and grace,
Rev. Frank E. Bernat, Jr.
United Methodist Pastor

dedication

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated with love to my dear sons Connor, Evan and Bailey and to my daughter Averi, who by their births have brought new meaning and purpose to the lives of their mother and I. And to my loving wife Melanie, without whose prayers this book would not have been written. And, above all, to my Loving God who has challenged me daily to be more than I ever imagined I could be.

Connor,
Evan, Averi
&
Bailey



how to use this book

The information in this book has been compiled in order to provide you with an ongoing developmental guide for your pregnancy. Bear in mind that all pregnancies are different. The actual day of the occurrence of the listed events may vary slightly. It is very important that you maintain a relationship with a qualified health-care provider, that will monitor your progress. The best way to personalize this book is to begin with your miracle's estimated due date. This date will correspond with day 266 of the pregnancy. On the page with day 266's information write the estimated due date, as provided by your physician. Then, by using a calendar as a guide, work backwards from day 266, writing in the dates. Continue marking backwards to day 15, the day that you first realized your period was late. Each page contains information concerning the changes and developments that will occur within the body of the mother and the child. A bible verse has been included, that will offer words that address events as they happen. A prayer has been written, that should help guide you in praying for the day's events. Also, at the bottom of each page, you will find an area for documenting any milestones that may have occurred on that day.

CONTRACTIONS

How to time them.

By learning to identify and time your contractions, you may be able to avoid premature labor, and will be able to provide your care giver with important information. Near the end of your pregnancy you may want to keep a notepad handy to jot this information down. How do you time the contractions? You will need to have access to either a stopwatch or at least a watch with a second hand.

- ♥ While lying on your left side, feel your belly. If it is firm and you are unable to press your fingertips in, you are having a contraction.
- ♥ When your belly begins to tighten, this is the beginning of the contraction. Write down the time. The amount of time between the beginning of one contraction until the beginning of another contraction is how far apart your contractions are.
- ♥ Record the duration of the contraction. The time from the beginning of the contraction until the end of the contraction is known as its duration. Most contractions last from 30-70 seconds.
- ♥ You will need to time your contractions for about 30 minutes. If there are occurring 10 minutes or less apart, notify your health care provider immediately.
- ♥ They will need to know how far the contractions are spaced apart and their duration.