

**Group Study on Infertility and Fertility Treatments**

*What you will need:*

* A print out of this document
* A Bible

*Read aloud the following excerpt and use your Bible to look up the passages cited in the text*

The desire for a child is a powerful emotion and, when unfulfilled, can be a huge source of grief. Some of the men and women of the Old Testament experienced this. When Rachel bore no children she cried to her husband, Jacob, saying: *“Give me children, or else I’ll die”* (Genesis 30:1). Jacob’s response is equally moving: *“Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?”* (Genesis 30:2)

While it can be tempting to let grief over infertility or childlessness overwhelm us, it is important to keep in mind that children are not “rights” but “gifts”. Scripture tells us that children are a blessing (Psalm 127) and that all life comes from God, and is under His control (1 Samuel 2:6). Indeed, our very lives are in His hands (Jeremiah 29:11), even before we were formed (Jeremiah 1:5).

Those who are experiencing infertility may, nevertheless, seek medical help to overcome the cause of infertility. Often the first place such couples turn to is the nearest IVF clinic. However, many do so without realising that there are other medical options available to help restore a couple’s fertility so that conception can still occur through the sexual act, as man and wife are joined together as *“one flesh”* (Genesis 2:24), rather than through artificial means (See below for links to information about NaPro Technology and FertilityCare in Australia).

IVF practices raise moral issues that couples may be unaware of until they are already deeply embedded in the process. For example, many IVF clinics offer pre-implantation genetic diagnosis which involves testing embryos in vitro for genetic or chromosomal disorders, and discarding those that are found to have a defective gene. Also, many IVF clinics create multiple embryos to increase the rate of success in achieving pregnancy. This leaves couples with the moral dilemma of what to do with any “excess” embryos. Should they freeze them? Discard them? Give them up for research? Donate them? Both of these practices are problematic because they result in the embryo being treated as a “product” to achieve a particular end, rather than as a gift of life from God.

Couples who suffer from infertility and single people who long for a child might also like to consider adoption or fostering children in need of love and care, or other ways of serving the community in ways that parents with children cannot. Such acts beautifully reflect our own status as God’s children, as we are adopted not because of our nature, but by grace.

*Discussion questions*

* What do you think are some of the key moral dilemmas that arise when thinking about fertility treatments?
* As previously stated on this page, life beings when sperm and egg join together. Does knowing that all the embryos created in an IVF procedure are human beings affect the way you perceive IVF? Explain.
* Even those blessed by God in many ways may not be blessed with children. For others, children may come eventually but not in their own timing. Think on Abraham and Sarah who were very old when they conceived. Is it always easy to wait for the time of God’s blessing to come or to trust God if it does come?
* What would you say to a friend facing infertility?

*Close with prayer*

*Further resources*

* Information about NaPro technology and how it can assist with diagnosing and treating underlying issues of infertility:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLt9wCCD7Qz6wTth-5F2-SJRBmvY-q-yX6>

* Information about where to find FertilityCare and NaPro technology services in Australia: <http://www.fertilitycare.com.au>.
* Further to the contacts that are provided in the aforementioned link, Dr Luke Mclindon at the Mater Hospital in Brisbane, QLD, runs this fertility service: <http://www.matermothers.org.au/services/fertility-services>