

How to pray for a childless couple

There are many more childless couples than we think. Such couples find this situation emotionally complex and extremely traumatic, irrespective of whether the problem lies with the man or the woman. Some feel God is punishing them, others that they are not worthy of raising children, that they are failures or that there is sin somewhere in their lives that is preventing God from blessing them. While it is impossible to give answers to all the questions, there are directives that can encourage us to pray for such couples in faith, believing that God answers prayer. The following are guidelines when praying for childless couples:

- Make sure of your relationship with the Lord. Are you in a living relationship with Jesus Christ? First of all, God is interested in your relationship with Him. Everything else flows from that. Don't rush this matter. Make sure.
- Deal with every kind of sin in your life. Don't go looking for sin, but ask the Lord if there is anything that He is not happy with. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you if anything has come between the Lord and you. God does not condemn, He is a God of grace and wants to forgive us and cleanse us from our sins.
- Many childless couples think they have committed some sin or other and for this reason God is punishing them and/or He doesn't want to tell them what they did wrong. Go and think how you see God. Do you see Him as a Father just waiting for you to do something wrong so that He can punish you, or a Father who is unwilling to help you and now you must plead and beg Him to change His mind – that you must overcome His unwillingness through prayer? I would like to advise you both to take time and go and write down what your emotions are around God, how you think about Him or feel about Him. Be honest – God knows what you are thinking and experiencing in any case. Then tell Him and ask Him to bring your thoughts and emotions in line with the way He really is. Do you see Him as a Father of love (real love), who loves unconditionally, a Father who is good, a Father who is gracious and a Father who forgives? This determines how you will pray.
- Pray boldly and ask Him for a child. Believe in God and believe God, which means: "Lord, we ask You for a child. With You nothing is impossible."
- It also means: "Lord, Your will be done. Your ways are not our ways. Whatever You decide is right. We subject ourselves to Your will, but we are also confident when we ask because You are our Father." There could be reasons why God won't allow you to have children, but then you must understand that it is not because God does not like or love you.
- Don't blame each other if nothing happens. Don't allow it to drive a wedge between the two of you. Don't blame yourself if the problem lies with you. Mostly it is more difficult for men to know they are the ones with the "problem". It affects their manliness and often gives rise to a poor self-image and all kinds of conclusions and emotions. Women experience it differently. That is why both of you must try to put these emotions into words and then pray about the matter.
- Live joyfully and hopefully. God is good and God is faithful and God is still almighty even if there is not going to be a baby. Do not allow the devil to rob you of your joy and don't let his condemnation and accusations rule your life.
- Ask the Lord what He wants to tell you about the situation. Listen well. It happens that one is sometimes so set on just asking and wrestling with God that He must give you a baby, that you don't listen carefully what God wants to say about the situation. There may be reasons why things work out like this in your case and it may have nothing to do with sin or unbelief.
- If you or your parents were perhaps involved in occult activities, it would be wise to pray with someone who has enough knowledge of these matters.
- There are ethical limits to our efforts of acquiring a baby. There is for example nothing wrong with adoption. But when it comes to surrogate mothers, the use of the sperm of another man, etc. we are at a point where we are crossing the boundaries of the Scriptures. We must live before God with integrity, morally pure and holy. This is God's intention with the Bible. This comment is not meant to be judgmental, but to caution and give guidance.

- Guidelines for people praying for childless couples: It is important that people praying for such couples will not be judgmental in their prayers, for example imply that the couple does not pray in faith or that there is sin in their lives. Don't act as if you have the answer. Rather listen and show unconditional love and be compassionate. Pray that if the couple goes for medical help that the doctors will make the correct diagnoses and treat such couples with integrity, and that the Lord will use the doctors to be of help.