

## What to Consider When Considering Adoption

So you are considering adoption? As the parents of four children, each of whom were welcomed into our family through adoption, we cannot think of anything more beautiful and wonderful. You may think to start the adoption process by seeking quality information and resources, evaluating the pros and cons of the various adoption alternatives and trying to identify a good agency. While all of these considerations are very important and certainly necessary steps along the way, we believe there are some equally important, but often overlooked, things you should consider as you get started.

**Assess Your Motivations** – Being honest about our motivations can be a tricky thing at times. The reality is, however, that when making an adoption decision healthy motivations are very important. For most people their motivations for adopting are often multi-faceted and even complex. It is not so much that there is one ‘right’ motivation for wanting to adopt, as there are several wrong motivations – motivations that more often than not lead to great disappointment and much hurt and heartache for everyone involved. It is important not to adopt because you are trying to prove something or make a point, because it is the “in” thing or even the “Christian thing” to do or because you want to “rescue” a child. Instead, a primary motivation for adopting should always be love – love that you have and are willing to unconditionally give to a child for a lifetime . . . love that will enable a child to heal and fully experience the blessings and security of a forever family . . . love that will point a child to the ultimate love – the unfailing love of God. So as you consider adoption be sure to honestly and openly examine and discuss your motivations.

**Develop Realistic Expectations** – We have found that adoptive parents that have realistic expectations about the adoption journey are far more likely to thrive even in the midst of the challenges often associated with adoption. Adoptive families who are willing to be honest and open about their experiences – both the highs and the lows – are often the best resource for helping those considering adoption learn what to truly expect. As you move forward it is essential to avoid overly romanticized notions and fairytale dreams of how your adoption will unfold. There will undoubtedly be “miracle moments” and indescribable joy along the way, but there will be some frustration and disappointment as well. As we always tell families, expect that the adoption journey will be difficult at times, but ultimately worth it all – so no matter what don’t try to go it alone. Talk with experienced adoptive families and others about what you should realistically expect and know that God is doing something truly beautiful, even if it does not always appear as you might have imagined.

**Pray Every Step of the Way** – With the vast amount of detail and complexity associated with the adoption process, it is far too easy to forget to prayerfully approach every step along the journey. Each decision and each alternative should be prayerfully considered. And yet, it can often be difficult to know just how and what to pray. If that’s the case for you, consider praying for wisdom and discernment, and maybe start by asking God to lead and guide you as you honestly assess your motivations and expectations. Also remember that so many lives are affected and impacted by each and every adoption – so don’t forget to pray for the child that God will bring into your family as well as that child’s birthparents, caregivers and the many people working to help you complete the adoption process. And be sure to invite friends and family to join with you as you pray every step of the way. Prayer can and will make all the difference.