

# Why Healthy Timing & Spacing of Pregnancies Aligns with Christian Values



When a mother or child is hurting, the whole family suffers. *"If one part suffers, every part suffers with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26a)*. Caring for one member of a family is caring for the entire family, and the entire Body of Christ.

## Christians Are Called to Serve

Helping families in need, especially vulnerable women and children, answers God's call to serve others. Scripture such as: *"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased" (Hebrews 13:16)*, shows the importance of serving and helping others, including keeping mothers healthy and able to take care of their children. Many church and Christian organizations do this through their own programs already. Their work is leveraged and has even greater reach with U.S. government support.

## Timing & Spacing of Pregnancies Saves Lives

Due to poverty and lack of knowledge about healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies (HTSP), many families in developing nations are not able to plan their pregnancies for when they are healthiest for the mother and child.

The lives of [1.6 million children](#) could be saved each year if births were spaced three years apart. And, planning pregnancies prevents unintended pregnancies, which reduces abortions. [Research published](#) by the Center for Global Development reveals when people had access to modern contraceptives, abortions decreased.



Community health volunteers, like these shown above, help families time and space pregnancies with support from the Christian Health Association of Kenya.

## CCIH Definition of HTSP

Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancies (HTSP) is also known as Family Planning. CCIH defines Family Planning as:

*"Enabling couples to determine the number and timing of pregnancies, including the voluntary use of methods for preventing pregnancy – not including abortion – harmonious with their values and religious beliefs."*

---

*Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from Him.*  
-Psalm 127:3

---

## Help from the U.S. Makes a Difference

There is a common misconception that the United States spends a large proportion of its budget on foreign assistance, without making much of an impact. This is simply not true. Foreign assistance makes up [less than 1 percent](#) of the U.S. Federal budget, according to the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, yet has saved millions of lives.

For example, as a result of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, introduced by President Bush, the number of people on lifesaving medicines for HIV grew from 50,000 in 2002 to 9.5 million in 2015. That's millions of children, brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers who are surviving and able to go to school, work, run businesses and contribute to their communities.



*Reverend Benson Chitumbo of the Baptist Union in Zambia discusses how he talks to his congregation about HTSP and encourages fellow faith leaders to learn about family planning and educate their communities. Visit [www.youtube.com/CCIntlHealth](http://www.youtube.com/CCIntlHealth) and see the Playlist on Religious Leaders and Family Planning for more.*

## Scripture Supporting Planning Our Families

Healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies enables families to space births so the mother can recover and empowers parents to choose for themselves the size of the family they want based on their desire for healthy children and their personal circumstances, leading them to abundant life.

We are called to minister to the spiritual lives of our brothers and sisters, as well as their physical well-being. We strive to address the whole person in our work so that their faith is strengthened and they have abundant life free of poverty and illness.

*“I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly” (John 10:10 KJV).*

## Marital Intimacy

Scripture also supports the idea that sexual relations between a husband and wife help build the intimacy that God intended to strengthen the marriage bond.

The [Song of Solomon \(Solomon 1\)](#) is a beautiful tribute to the romance between a husband and wife. It does not address sexual relations to produce children but as an expression of love. Using methods to time and space pregnancies furthers intimacy and the marital bond.

**This document is available online at [www.ccih.org](http://www.ccih.org) under Resources > Family Planning & Reproductive Health > Advocacy and Policy Resources**

## Support for International HTSP/FP Programs Helps Families Struggling with Poverty

Families in developing countries often struggle to feed and clothe their children, with many living on less than \$2 a day, according to the World Bank [Poverty Overview](#). Helping families time their pregnancies for when they are healthiest for the mother and child and enabling them to reach their desired healthy family size is a matter of life and death and is an answer to our Christian calling to serve.

## HTSP/FP Improves Education of Women and Girls

By avoiding unintended pregnancies, family planning enables girls and women to stay in school, allowing them to increase economic help to their families.

## Families and Communities Thrive as Women Increase Earnings

HTSP/Family planning enables more women to participate in the economy and generate income for themselves and their families, contributing to the well-being of the family and their community.



*A Catholic priest discusses the Standard Days Method® of natural family planning with other religious leaders. Photo courtesy of the Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau.*