

Scriptural Support for Planning Safe and Healthy Pregnancies

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.

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.

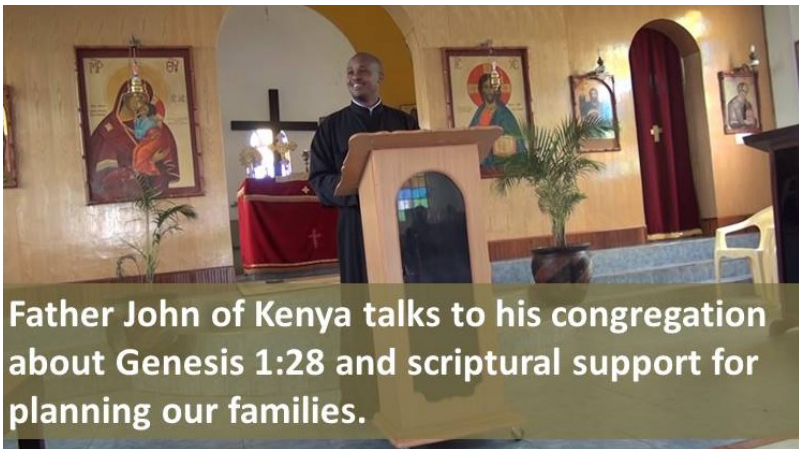
Support for HTSP Programs Helps Families Struggling with Poverty

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.

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2 NIV).

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 other circumstances.



Father John Waihiga of the Orthodox Church Kimende in Kenya talks to his congregation about family planning.

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

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.

“Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8 NIV).

We have a responsibility to take care of our families, and that means planning the number of children we can support, nurture and educate.

“God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground’” (Genesis 1:28 NIV).

The command to Adam and Eve to “be fruitful and increase in number” before the Fall of Man also speaks to exercising responsible dominion over God’s creation that we all share. HTSP demonstrates responsibility in family life helping to keep mothers and children healthy and strong and better prepared to avoid illness and other hardship.

This document is available online at www.ccih.org under Resources > Family Planning & Reproductive Health

Bible Stories Involving Timing and Spacing of Pregnancies

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

Scriptural Support

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.

Genesis 38: The story of Onan

The story of Onan is often cited as evidence that God disapproves of contraception. Onan was instructed to have sexual relations with his brother’s widow for the purpose of producing an heir for his brother, as was customary at the time. Onan had relations with the widow, but used the withdrawal method to avoid a pregnancy, resulting in punishment by God. When viewed in its entirety, this story is about Onan’s selfishness and greed: his sin is using the widow for his own pleasure instead of helping his family, not because he used contraception.



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