

## PRE-NATAL CARE FOR THE SOUL

*During this Advent time, when we wait to receive the fullness of God's life in us, we can get ourselves ready for the Day - knowing that God's life is already growing inside us, that we are already bearers of God's love and light to the world. Here are some tips for spiritual "pre-natal" care:*

### NUTRITION

*Eat foods rich in nutrients and vitamin; avoid empty calories.*  
Make sure that what comes into your body, mind and spirit has goodness and content to it. "Vegging out" with the tube, or mindless chatter can be an occasional indulgence, but for spiritual health try reading, thinking, praying with a friend.

*Supplement your diet with vitamins for you and your "new life."*  
When you're "eating for two" - which, in a way, Christians always are - make sure you're getting enough nutrition so you can share with others. Eating once a week is not enough! Read a spiritual book, live a daily prayer discipline, meet with friends from church for prayer encouragement, and support, be involved in ministry - supplement what you get at church.

### EDUCATION

*Read books about expectancy, birth and care for your new life.*  
Reading our "owner's manual" - the Bible - is crucial for being prepared to bear the life of God into this world. There are also great books out there about prayer, ministry, preaching, worship, biographies of faith - check them out.

*Attend "childbirth" classes*  
Childbirth may be natural, but you still can learn better ways to do it. Faith may be a gift, but it needs to be nurtured through study, prayer and fellowship with other learners.

## EXERCISE

*Giving birth is a marathon - you've got to get your body in shape.*  
Bearing God into the world is something we're called to do all the time, and we have to be in shape too: exercise your faith muscles through prayer with thanksgiving; your trust muscles through praising God; your compassion through getting involved in someone else's world; your love through giving yourself away.

### MEDICAL CARE

*Have a thorough physical.*  
Assess your spiritual health - Is your heart in good shape for loving, or is it in pain? Are your faith muscles working? Is your brain in regular contact with its Maker?

*Do a family history.*  
What are the faith lives of your parents and siblings like? Are there spiritual pitfalls to be aware of in your family history? Are there diseases, physical or mental, that hold you back from giving yourself to God?

*Have regular check-ups, ultra-sounds and blood-work.*  
Very important when you're expecting! Sunday worship is a good check-in, but we all need additional check-ups - with clergy or a good friend, or just in prayer with God. The Holy Spirit can do an ultra-sound on our souls anytime we ask - He can see right in. Ask for blood-work too - is the life of Christ flowing through our veins? How's our cholesterol - plaque build-up of hurts and resentments, or is our blood healthy?

### COMMON COMPLAINTS WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTING

*Fatigue* - Get some help - and get some rest.  
*Anxiety* - Relax - we're just light-bearers, not the Light.  
*Back pain* - Don't try to carry so much - hand it off to Jesus.  
*Swelling feet* - Spend more time on your knees !