

Breastfeeding or Bottle Feeding?

Taken from Chapter 3 of *Praying Through Your Child's Early Years*.

Encouragement for Mothers Who Breastfeed:

You might be the type of mom who breastfeeds her baby maybe for a week. Or, you might breastfeed for a month, or perhaps you plan on nursing your child until he is over two like I did. Any amount of time that you are able to nurse will benefit both you and your baby tremendously. Did you know that you burn an extra 300 calories a day simply by breastfeeding? That adds up to 9,000 calories a month, or the equivalent of about four pounds. But more importantly, breastfeeding provides essential nutrients and antibodies to your baby, is easier to digest (especially important for a premature baby), and helps ward off disease.

The way I see it, God did a great job at designing mother's milk for her baby, so I was thrilled to be able to breastfeed Micah. It was much easier for me than waking myself up in the middle of the night to walk into the kitchen, put together a bottle, heat it to the correct temperature, feed the baby and then clean up afterward. Instead, I simply rolled over, picked up my baby from his co-sleeper that was attached to my bed right next to me, and laid there while I nursed him.

Some moms love to nurse, but find they are having challenges staying with it. If this is the case, don't feel bad. I promise you that your baby does not judge you and neither do I. As an encouragement, below I've listed ten tips to help you to be successful at breastfeeding:

1. Seek help from your mom, a friend or a lactation counselor who has had experience with nursing. Your hospital should provide you with a lactation counselor if you need help; or if you had your baby at home, your midwife should be more than happy to help you.
2. Use the La Leche League website for tips, online chat, forum help, and more. Consider taking a La Leche League class or joining a group.
3. Ask your husband to support your decision.
4. Sleep near your baby so that you can easily meet his needs.
5. Don't be concerned with watching the clock; listen to your baby's needs. If he or she is hungry, it's time to be fed. There were times when Micah was teething or not feeling well and he wanted to nurse almost every hour! Was it exhausting, yes, but so worth it for my child.
6. Have a comfortable place to nurse, such as a special rocking chair, a favorite place on the couch or in your bed. When I sat in my special chair or on the couch, I loved using the Boppy and the My Breast Friend nursing pillows. They helped make it so much easier to get Micah into the proper nursing position.
7. To encourage your baby to nurse, do not supplement with bottles (unless absolutely necessary).
8. Drink plenty of water while you are nursing and throughout the day to support your body's milk production.
9. Surround yourself with people who support you, and don't worry about what others think. I would nurse on the go wherever we were. I always had a little baby blanket to cover up with but now they have some great nursing cover-ups available online.

Encouragement for Mothers Who Bottle Feed:

Some women cannot breastfeed for a variety of physical and medical reasons. If you are one of these women, don't feel bad. You are just as much a good, loving mother as you would be if you were feeding differently. I've heard of women who felt depressed because they were unable to breastfeed, and that is not right. Your value as a mother and your self-esteem is not dependent on how you feed your baby. Your baby will bond to you and love you, either way.

Other women might need to bottle feed because they must go back to work, or because they are raising a baby for another mom who died or cannot raise her own child. God bless you! The important thing is that your baby receives nutrition so he or she can grow up to be a servant of God.

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- ~ What is the most challenging situation you have faced as a Doula?
- ~ What is the most rewarding situation you have faced as a Doula?
- ~ Do you have a particular Back-Up Doula?
 - Would I be able to meet with her prior to labor?
 - In what situations would your Back-Up Doula be sent to my birth?
 - What percent of your clients' births do you attend?
 - How often is your Back-Up Doula sent to a birth?
- ~ When will you join me in labor?
 - While I am still at home? In early labor? Only in active labor?
 - When I arrive at the hospital?
 - When I specifically let you know that I need you?
- ~ How many births have you done with the hospital where I will be giving birth?
 - How was your experience there?
- ~ How many births have you done with my group of doctors?
 - How was your experience with them?
- ~ How much do you charge?
 - Do you have a contract?
 - When do I have to pay you?
- ~ If someone suggests something that you feel is not in my best interest, what will you do?
- ~ Are you willing to accompany me into the operating room if a Cesarean is required?
- ~ How many visits do you provide before labor?
- ~ How many visits do you provide after birth?
- ~ How will you interact with my Partner?
- ~ Do you have any references of former clients that I may call?
- ~ Can you refer me to other Doulas that I may interview?

NOTE:

Because this list is provided as a courtesy only, and does not necessarily endorse the services of any particular Doula, please feel free to:

- ~ Call or check a website of their organization to verify the person's certification.
- ~ Call any references that the person provides for you.

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