

FACING PREGNANCY CHOICES WITH FAITH



www.faithvoicesforreproductivejustice.co.uk

People of faith, like many others, may face choices about what to do about their pregnancy. If you are in this situation, it is important to remember that you have options, and that there are always people who can help.

Ultimately, the decision about what you will do is yours and only you can make it. Throughout the decision-making process and beyond it is important to remember there is absolutely nothing that can separate you from the love and understanding of God. Your faith and your choice do not have to be in tension and God will be with you as you make your way forward.

Pregnancies are not all the same. Some are meticulously planned, some are unintended and some bring a whole range of unexpected complexities. To make the best decision about how you move forward is a big and important responsibility. For this very reason it is not selfish to be seriously considering the choices ahead. There are genuine options open to you and you as a person of faith have a right to explore them fully.

•➔ Your Experience Matters

Pregnancy can be experienced as a great gift, but this is not everyone's experience. However you feel about your own circumstances is totally valid.

Deciding when and under what circumstances you choose to have a child is deeply personal and there is no wrong or right way to feel. Try to take time to explore how you are feeling in your body and mind about your situation, knowing that anything that comes up is absolutely fine.

•➔ Faith and Freedom

Christians and people of faith do not all think the same way about reproductive choice. There are many people of faith who are supportive of choice *because* of their faith, not in spite of it. And while there are many different reasons for this support, most pro-choice people of faith emphasise the worth and dignity of the person making the choice. Genuinely exploring pregnancy choice is, for many, part of what Jesus meant by experiencing life in all its fullness.

•➔ Talking and Sharing

During this time it will help to talk to someone you trust. This could be your partner, a family member or a close friend. However, that can sometimes be hard if you're worried about negative reactions. There are supportive organisations where someone will listen to you fully and without judgement. You can reach out to them for help and emotional support. It is important that you consult with a healthcare professional if you have any health concerns .

•➔ Your Decision and Your Faith

Talking about your situation with someone you trust can help you process what you are going through. Healthcare providers, partners and those you choose to share with can play a part in helping you decide but ultimately only you have the right to make decisions about your pregnancy. Your relationship with God and your faith can help you as you decide what to do. Prayer, meditation, readings and rituals can help you incorporate your faith in this important season



FAITH VOICES

for reproductive justice

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO COMFORT AND HEALING

GOD'S LOVE, UNDERSTANDING AND COMPASSION ARE ALWAYS THERE FOR YOU

EXPLORING OPTIONS

Making a decision about pregnancy that takes in all the circumstances of your life is the right thing to do. There are many factors to think through, from your current family situation to your financial circumstances and your physical or mental health. If you are considering whether to have an abortion or continue your pregnancy to parent a child or pursue adoption, it will help to discuss with a trusted person. Through open reflection and conversation, you can reach a decision that is fully yours. There are always support services available to you, and some are listed below.

WHAT ABOUT MY FAITH?

Some people find that their faith provides a great deal of comfort and reassurance when making decisions about their pregnancy. For others, faith can be a complicated and worrying addition to the situation, particularly when considering abortion. These are some common questions for people of faith in your situation:

Do I need to be forgiven? However you answer this question, your feelings matter and should be honoured. Many people who've had an abortion feel that God understands the choice they've made. Feeling forgiven by God might be important for you but no one else can tell you that you need God's forgiveness.

Will God forgive me? If it is important to you to feel that God would forgive you for having an abortion, think about what God means to you. As a God of Love, what might God have to say to you in your situation? What would true understanding sound like to you? Can you write it out?

Is Abortion a Sin? If you've heard faith leaders describe abortion as sinful, this can stay with you, but it is important to know that there are many different religious views on the spiritual implications and the morality of abortion. You will have your own beliefs about this. No matter how you feel, you are not and cannot be cut off from the God of love.

People of all faiths, and from all over the world have abortions. There is a long history of non-judgemental pastoral support from faith leaders from across traditions. There is support here too, even if it doesn't seem visible in NI right now.

SUPPORT SERVICES

•→ Informing Choices

Informing Choices NI offer non-directive pregnancy choices counselling on all your options. They also provide post pregnancy counselling on pregnancy loss, whether it is through miscarriage, stillbirth or abortion, traumatic birth and counselling for postnatal depression or anxiety. To make an appointment please call 028 9031 6100. More information is also available at www.informingchoicesni.org/counselling

•→ Lucht Cabhrach Abortion Doulas

Alliance for Choice have a number of trained Abortion Doulas, who can compliment the existing limited abortion provision in Northern Ireland. We can talk on the phone, message, accompany you to clinics or help you source the right support for you. If you need an Abortion Doula please call 07397 902774 and someone will help you. <https://www.luchtcabhrach.com/>

•→ Antenatal Results and Choices

Antenatal Results and Choices is a UK-wide charity supporting families before, during and after antenatal testing as well as those who have lost a baby after a prenatal diagnosis. You can call their national helpline Monday to Friday, 10.00am-5.30pm; on 0207 713 7486. <https://www.arc-uk.org/>

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