

Exploring Adoption/Foster Care

Millions of children around the world need a family. Many homes seem to have something missing that adoption or foster care offers to fill. Exploring adoption or foster care means prayerfully weighing many practical concerns in your head against the often inexplicable tugging of your heart. Consider the impact you could have in the life of a child who would not otherwise have a mother or father. How might God be leading you to change their circumstances? What kind of home and family might you be able to provide? Which route is best - domestic adoption, international adoption, or foster care? With so many significant factors to consider, where do you start?

STEP ONE: Understand God's Heart for Orphans

The Bible is extremely clear about God's care, concern and provision for the orphan. It's easy to grow anxious if you explore adoption in your own limited strength and understanding. There is peace, however, in seeking to know and reflect on God's heart for adoption. You can do that by reading and meditating on verses in the Bible about adoption and care for orphans (for example, Deuteronomy 10:18, Exodus 22:22-24, James 1:27, Job 29:1-12, Esther 2:7 and 2 Samuel 9:3). As you read these scriptures, consider setting aside time for fasting and seeking the Lord's will for your home.

Seeking God's heart for orphans will stretch your perspective. It will change the kind of cost/benefit analysis you bring to your decisions. It also can give you peace and patience for the details of adoption and can grow your trust in God's ability to provide for you in what He's calling you to do.

While seeking God's heart for orphans, you might find yourself considering entirely different approaches to adoption. You also may discover opportunities to show care for orphans in ways other than adoption. This is where foster care can play a significant role.

STEP TWO: Educate Yourself

One of the best ways to increase your understanding of both the head and heart issues of adoption is to spend time with others who have adopted - to hear from them the joys and challenges of each step along the way. Connect with families that have adopted or have had foster placements in their home to learn from those who have walked this path before you.

Much about adoption has changed in the past few decades. New opportunities have emerged alongside new challenges. At the same time, various churches and non-profit ministries have expanded their support for orphans and adoption, providing a broad range of information and services about things such as federal tax benefits and financial assistance through grants available to adopting families. Take advantage of resources, and books on the *Going Further* suggestions to help you in this process.

GOING FURTHER – Books available in First EPC Library

Handbook on Thriving as an Adoptive Family: Real-Life Solutions to Common Challenges (by David and Renee Sanford) will equip readers to be successful adoptive parents. It is the one parenting resource that provides comprehensive, topical, Bible-based solutions for the inevitable challenges after adoption.

Reframing Foster Care (by Jason Johnson) gives readers realistic and inspirational insights on the foster parenting journey.

Fields of the Fatherless: Discover the Joy of Compassionate Living (by C. Thomas Davis) inspires readers to share God's heart for orphans and offers a broad range of helpful resources and organizations.

Recommended Websites:

HowtoAdopt.org is a service of Shaohannah's Hope, the organization founded by Christian musician Steven Curtis Chapman. It provides background information, responses to myths about adoption and practical steps for pursuing adoption.

Reecesrainbow.org is a grant foundation that assists families interested in adopting children with special needs.

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