

Coping with the Holidays



Many infertile couples feel isolated from the “fertile” world during the holidays. The Christmas season can be a painful reminder of a longed for child. While it’s not healthy to avoid everyone and anything, it can be healthy to avoid situations and places that make you feel worse. Use thoughtful planning to increase your chances of having a pleasant and peaceful Christmas time. Below are some ideas on how to cope with the holiday season:

You may want to see some close family members, such as your parents, a week or two before the holidays and spend some quality time alone with them.

Be selective about accepting invitations to parties, especially if you know there will be lots of children or pregnant women there. Remember, you do not have to say yes to any invitation, even ones from family and close friends. (You may want to be honest with some friends or relatives as to why you can’t attend as these situations are just too painful right now.)

If you must go, then consider arriving late, maybe just in time for dinner, and leaving early.

Decide in advance how you will handle difficult and/or insensitive questions. They will be asked. If it will upset you, don’t share any information. (Again, you may want to be honest with some friends and relatives.) Plan your responses; but, don’t feel that you have to give all of the details of your situation. A simple “No, we don’t have children” is sufficient.

Pay attention to where you go. If large families with children at the mall are too much, shop online or from a catalog. Go to a midnight church service or one that is not aimed at families on Christmas Eve (you might consider the 7pm service at Cypress Bible Church.)

Spend quality time doing things you like best. Go to your favorite restaurant. See a movie or a play.

Consider going out of town. Spend a few nights at a bed and breakfast. Plan a ski trip. You may get some comments from others, such as, “How can you be so selfish?” These comments may be easier to bear than a house full of children.

Participate in helping others. Some suggestions are taking cookies to a nursing home, invite a lonely neighbor over for dinner or pick a child off of an angel tree (you may want to pick one who is the same age as a child that you have lost would be).

Set aside time to talk with your spouse and share how you are feeling. Allow yourself time to feel sad or depressed; don't "bottle-up" your feelings. Infertility is a major life crisis. Lean on your spouse to comfort you through these tough times.

Keep in close contact with those who are supporting you through this hard time. They can encourage you as you struggle through this holiday season.

Don't forget to enjoy the holiday "spirit." Participate in activities which bring meaning to you and create the joy intended during Christmas.

Most importantly, pray. Pray for God's governance over a difficult period in your life.

*"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."
2 Corinthians 12:9*