

# The Church's Opportunity to Help Abortion Vulnerable Women Choose Life

The first step in the "Prevent the One" initiative starts with the awareness that how we (as the Church) respond to unplanned pregnancies will impact whether the woman will choose life or not, and whether she will feel we are someone safe she can turn to for help. Can we leave the "holier than thou" attitude at the door, and appreciate the strength of someone to own their mistake, and help her embrace Motherhood? Can we honor the courage of a young woman and help her navigate pregnancy and parenthood? After all, following Jesus is all about forgiveness, receiving it for our own sins and extending it to others, who have also sinned.

The second step in "Prevent the One" requires churches to put a simple announcement in your bulletin insert every week that states: **"If you are facing an unplanned pregnancy, we are here to help you with non-judgmental support and care. Call our office or visit this local pregnancy resource center. You and your baby are welcome here."** This simple message faithfully posted in your weekly service communications speaks volumes about the type of church you are!

The third step in "Prevent the One" is to communicate with the church staff and parishioners that your church is a safe place for sinners, especially those facing an unplanned pregnancy. This happens through the teaching and preaching done on Sundays, but it is also modeled through the grace and mercy extended to those who acknowledge their bad choices and are provided help to get their life back on track.

The fourth and final step to "Prevent the One" is for your church to connect with a local pregnancy center that is prepared to provide the practical resources every pregnant woman needs. They will be able to connect her to healthcare services, legal support if child support is an issue, material resources like clothing, diapers, cribs, and parenting classes. Your partnership with them may include throwing a baby shower to collect items she and other clients will need or financially supporting them from your missions' budget. If you don't have a pregnancy center in your area, consider starting one!

It is helpful to also include the father of the baby in the church's outreach and support ministry offered, recognizing that every child benefits when both his or her mother and father are involved in day to day parenting.

**Why is it that pregnant women and girls in our churches are not coming to us for help?**

Julie Roys, a writer for *Christianity Today*, answers this question in an article titled "Why are Evangelical Women at Planned Parenthood?" She wrote the article to counter another one published in *Marie Claire* women's magazine, which affirmed the decision of these women to have abortions. The article broke my heart, as it captured an all too common story that I've heard from many women struggling after an abortion.

The first three paragraphs from the article speak volumes:

"She was a regular churchgoer who had grown up in a Christian family. But when Jackie (not her real name) became pregnant after a divorce and a season of uncharacteristic promiscuity, she panicked and got an abortion. 'I just got into this very devastated, dark place,' she told me. 'I can hardly even believe that I ever was that person—scared to death. I grew up in a family [where] nobody had a child out of wedlock. ... I just couldn't imagine telling them about being pregnant.'"

Jackie was the first woman who had an abortion that I ever interviewed who had gotten it after becoming a Christian. What made her story even more troubling was that the person who had driven Jackie to Planned Parenthood was a friend from church. Her friend knew just where to go and what to do because she had gotten an abortion about 10 years prior—when she was a student at an evangelical college.

Since interviewing Jackie, I've learned that thousands of professing Christians get abortions every year. This unsettling fact was recently reported all too smugly in the feminist magazine *Marie Claire*. The article, titled 'The Secret Evangelicals at Planned Parenthood,' announced, 'They may demonize the health clinic in public, but throngs of young Christian women are patronizing it in private for birth control, preventative care, and yes, even abortions.'"

**PREVENT THE ONE! DO IT NOW!**

## Can the Church Prevent One Abortion?

Research by LifeWay and Care-Net indicates the Church indeed can prevent as many as 400,000 abortions annually. Their study, done in 2015, unearthed some telling data about women and abortion. Of the 1,038 women surveyed who had abortions, 70 percent claimed a Christian religious preference, and this is the critical statistic: 43% of the women having abortions were in a church service within 30 days prior to aborting their baby.

The survey also revealed that women dealing with unplanned pregnancies saw the Church as “lacking grace” and “gossiping rather than helping”. Among women who had an abortion:

- ▶ 65% say church members judge single women who are pregnant.
- ▶ 54% think churches oversimplify the decisions about pregnancy options.
- ▶ Fewer than half (41%) of the women believe churches are prepared to help with unwanted pregnancies.
- ▶ And, only 3 in 10 women think churches give accurate advice about pregnancy options.

Given that the United States is at just under a million babies dying each year from abortion, 43% is at least 400,000 abortions. That’s a lot of babies being aborted by moms who were very possibly attending a church that would help them choose life.

*Prevent the One was inspired by this powerful article:  
[EqualRightsInstitute.com/PastorArticle](http://EqualRightsInstitute.com/PastorArticle)*

“Most women seeking abortions aren’t uber-political. They aren’t members of the aggressively pro-abortion, Twitter-argument-waging, shout-your-abortion crowd. They aren’t calculating murderers. They’re afraid.

Women facing an unplanned pregnancy often have reasonable, here-and-now fears. They may fear the loss of financial stability—or the loss of the ability to ever reach it. They may fear the loss of an already teetering status quo in which every available ounce of food is already consumed at home—perhaps by other children they’re already parenting. Pregnant women may lose a job, or they may not get the job they were hoping for. They may fear a violent boyfriend or father.

They may even fear pregnancy itself, which is often full of terrifying sickness, physical pain, loss of emotional control, and embarrassing bodily problems. All of these fears are real and oft-cited at crisis-pregnancy centers the country over. A common theme weaves through most of them: the fear of other people.”

Maria Baer, Pregnancy Counselor

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ABORTION  
WE  
KNOW  
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PREVENT  
the