

I have heard that one out of every eight women is infertile. Never did I think I would be the one out of the eight. My husband and I come from families in which most give birth later in life without problems, so we were never in a hurry to start a family. When my dad was diagnosed with ALSⁱ, my husband and I became more serious about trying to become pregnant. But it didn't happen. A family member suggested I see a specialist, but my medical insuranceⁱⁱ didn't cover it. My gynaecologist did a test that indicated my progesterone was low but told me to wait and come back only when I was frustrated. A friend at church suggested I visit a specialist that a friend of hers had seen. While seeing the doctor, I underwent endometriosis surgery and six unsuccessful rounds of artificial insemination (IUI) to help with my husband's motility problems. My tubes were clear, so it didn't sound like IVF would offer much hope for me either.

At the same time, my husband and I completed an adoption home study and became licensed foster parents the same month as our last failed attempt at IUI. (In the meantime, my father passed away.) My husband and I went on vacation, and my husband's only rule was that we were not to discuss children while we were away. This was very hard, as we visited Disneyland on Mothers' Day. Still, I tried to have a good attitude that one way or the other, my husband and I would be parents of some sort when we returned home – either through fostering or adoption.

After we returned from vacation, I felt weird, but I had tried different medication to help with infertility the previous month, and so I didn't think much about it. I was becoming a bit weary, and I spoke with my pastor. I realised that I needed to ask God to help me with infertility because I knew I just couldn't do it on my own. My husband and I attended a foster care meeting and were told we might have to wait four months for our first placement. On the way home from the meeting, I prayed about adoption because I'd thought about approaching a regular adoption agency in addition to foster care adoption. That same day, a friend joked with me about being pregnant because I had gained weight. I brushed her comment aside because so many times I had thought I was pregnant but wasn't. My

husband went out to get some fast food, and I stayed at home and took a pregnancy test just because of my symptoms. I didn't want to say much to my husband for fear of feeling like I'd let him down again. I took the test that night, and it was positive. I took a second test and it, too, was positive!

Fast forward forty weeks and two days of my pregnancy. I went to the doctor for a test to see if I could wait for induction. The baby's heart rate had dropped so I was induced immediately. Then his heart rate continued to drop and, at one point, the doctors couldn't detect it. Thankfully, later, they found it again. The hospital labelled the situation as 'code red', and my baby was delivered via emergency Caesarean section. After delivery, the doctors said that if the baby had been born one day later, he would not have been alive. He is truly a miracle baby. Even before he was born, my husband and I chose the middle name of Samuel for our son. Samuel means 'God has heard'.

I want to encourage anyone experiencing infertility. You are not alone. There are others out there who can identify with what you are going through. Each woman who experiences infertility has her own journey. Each journey is different. I have friends and family who have learned to live with childlessness. I have friends who have adopted, and I have friends who went on to give birth. No matter what, each of these women is special to God and loved by Him.

Heidi

This is Heidi's story and expresses her personal opinions.

ⁱ Also known as Lou Gehrig's or motor neurone disease.

ⁱⁱ Heidi lives in the US.