

Andrew and I have been married for over five years now and have wanted children, but after five years of fruitless trying we wondered if we may never become parents.

Most of my family have children and are not married, which my mother did not hesitate to point out to us. As we are the only Christians in my family it was hurtful to me when they said such things. Even my older sister had said: 'God has blessed me and not you because you're evil'.

Also my younger sister, who we have supported a lot and introduced her to our church, has said to me many times: 'a woman is not a woman until she has had children'. She is now 27 weeks pregnant. We fell out recently and she sent some nasty text messages which included: 'You're just jealous cos I have a child on the way', but a few days later she was taken to hospital with a blood clot in her lung. And yet again we are the ones supporting her and caring for her dog in our house.

My younger sister hurt me so much that we had to text back saying we did not want contact with her anymore. But since she became ill, as she lives in Derby and the rest of our family are in Nottingham, we feel it is the right thing for us to continue supporting her.

Andrew and I tried seeking help from our family doctor to see if there is a reason we had not conceived. I had a blood test which confirms that I ovulate, but then Andrew had to go through a test and as he faints at any thought of medical things he was unable to go through with it, so we could not go any further.

I never gave up believing, but Andrew has since said he thought around November 2010 that maybe we would never have children. But November is my birthday month and I actually asked God for a child for my birthday (asking to fall pregnant).

I went into town one Saturday in January to meet my friend Margaret and we saw some Christians from a group called *Healing on the Streets*. One of the workers asked me if I wanted healing for anything and I told her how much I wanted

children, and that Andrew and I had bought a two-bedroomed house when we got married. One of the first rooms I decorated was the spare room which I painted yellow, thinking it would be a nursery but it became a storage room for anything/study/computer room and even has cobwebs in the corners of the ceiling. We also bought a puppy more than two years ago (who destroyed my feather duster which is why the cobwebs are there!) and although he filled my emptiness initially, he has grown and does not replace my desire for children anymore. I told the worker that my house is empty and too quiet; I long for the sound of my own children.

Two other female workers joined her and they prayed over me. At first I was embarrassed because it was so public and they hovered their hands over my stomach, but I told myself to shut up trying to explain that to them and simply join in praying. As well as asking God for healing, they prayed against the negative things that had been said over our marriage from people predicting it would not last and that we would never have children. These were not only people from my own family; a lot of what had been said had come from so-called friends.

Three weeks later we tried for a child again. Shortly after, I met my friend Margaret in town again and told her that I kept feeling shaky. She smiled and said that her sister-in-law always feels shaky in the very early weeks whenever she is pregnant.

When I was a day 'late' I kept dreaming that I did a pregnancy test which was negative. This dream kept repeating itself but it was just my anxieties acting out, as it is different when I have dreams from God to tell me something.

Eventually I did a pregnancy test. It takes five minutes to work but after just two minutes I could not help checking it, then I worried because it did not look positive. One minute later it still did not look good... it was the longest five minutes of my life! But after five minutes it showed positive! It was the perfect Valentine's Day gift for Andrew.

For Mother's Day we drove to Wales to visit Andrew's parents for a long weekend. We arrived unexpectedly late - at 11 pm - so we waited until breakfast the

following day to give his mother what she thought was a Mother's Day card. But when she opened it, she read 'Happy grandparents in waiting'. Andrew's parents were so excited to learn they are finally going to be grandparents!

Our baby is due in October 2011. We are so thrilled and excited about this wonderful gift from God, and we love our little one already.

Nicola and Andrew

This is Nicola and Andrew's story and expresses their personal opinions.