**Dealing with the sorrow of miscarriage**

"13 weeks" is scrawled across today’s date in blue handwriting. My mind drifts back to when I first wrote those words on my calendar more than a month ago. I’d been delirious with joy. After a year and a half of trying, my husband and I had finally conceived.

My baby would have been 13 weeks old today – officially past the "danger zone."

*Would have been..*.

I convince myself to sit down, put my head in my hands and count to 10. "Not again," I whisper. I’m so tired of crying, so tired of reliving the sadness. Yet, it’s only a Fisher-Price® commercial away – I’m reminded every time I glimpse a baby carriage, a tiny shoe or a mother-to-be: *My baby is gone*.

My husband tries to comfort me, telling me we’re not alone – a fact which had eluded me since I miscarried at six weeks. It was then that friends either went silent for not knowing what to say or unloaded similar experiences. I was shocked to learn one had endured six miscarriages in five years. As well-meaning as our friends were, I took little comfort in the fact that my miscarriage was perhaps only the first of many.

Some friends knew how to console, reassuring us that our little "Papoose," as we called our baby, would be waiting for us in heaven, alive and well.

Nevertheless, in the end, they’re just words – powerless words – unable to fight the endless grief which threatens to overtake me.

**Learning to grieve together**

My husband and I grieve very differently, much like we consume a steak dinner. He devours it, consuming with rabid speed until he’s finished. I, on the other hand, chew my dinner slowly, until I’m too full to take another bite.

Yet, in spite of our differences, we’ve both learned the value of a well-timed embrace. So many mornings, I crumble into his arms and he just holds me, grips me, taking all of my sadness and letting it fall on his shoulders. And every evening we pray together, that God would use this pain for His glory and that He would bless us with another child.

My husband helps me see it’s not my fault – that for all of my precautions and prayers, nothing could have saved our baby. It just wasn’t meant to be. Such sadness in a divinely orchestrated world is hard for me to comprehend – until I consider that, perhaps, this too shall pass, and ultimately, my response to this will build in me perseverance . . . and perseverance, hope.

But for the moment, I’m too sad to care. So I trust that Jesus will mend me in His timing and help me be gracious toward all my friends who are currently expecting or are already mothers.

**Surrendering our dreams to God**

There’s no describing how attached we’d become to Papoose. While only a cluster of cells, from the moment of conception, we became parents – chatting away to our baby as we lay in bed, envisioning his or her smile, then placing hands over my womb and praying God would keep our little one safe.

After learning of our miscarriage, we relayed the news to my parents. It was hard to see the disappointment in their faces, the confusion, having never experienced a miscarriage themselves. It was hard to hear my dad ask, "Was there something you could have done?" – knowing he meant well but still feeling the sting of guilt. Even though we couldn’t have prevented the miscarriage, our parental instincts told us we *should* have.

When Mum, who’s battling brain cancer, asked with big blue eyes, "Was it because I hugged you too hard the other day?" it offered a brief chance to lapse into laughter.

Then, with aching souls, we left to spend the day at the beach. We built a stone memorial for Papoose, then watched as the waves licked at the shore, begging the tide to take away our sorrows. Lying there on the blanket, we thought of all the dreams we’d had for that beautiful little baby, and we surrendered them to God. Then we let the wind dry our eyes and the vacant sky still our hearts.

The beach remained inside me, long after I began bleeding. There was many a moment when I would close my eyes and feel the sting of the wind against my cheek. And then, on the day when the placenta actually left my body, I saw the waves crash before me as I opened my Bible to Psalm 113:9 and read, "He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children."

It’s a verse which I choose to believe, in spite of the blood and the pain. It’s a verse I’ll cling to as I watch Fisher-Price commercials and visit my friends and their newborn children. And it’s a verse I’ll rejoice in when I finally meet Papoose, face to face, in the long-awaited kingdom of heaven.

*-Emily Wierenga*

**Coping after miscarriage**

Sadly, pregnancy loss is surprisingly common. Estimates say about 20 per cent of pregnancies end in miscarriage. However, the excruciating pain of this loss is anything but common. Since, for many, this loss is very private, the larger community often does not know how to respond or help.

Many women who miscarry may experience some or all of these feelings:

* guilt
* depression
* anger
* jealousy
* withdrawal
* debilitating sadness
* fear

A husband may or may not understand all of these feelings, especially because his hormones have not been engaged in the pregnancy as his wife’s has. Also, until a baby actually arrives, pregnancies often seem more "real" to women than to men. Men grieve, too, but it *is*different.

If you’ve experienced a miscarriage, let each other express grief in the way that works for you. This is the time to nurture your marriage. Talk openly about your dreams and hopes, your fears and your sadness. Give your baby an identity so that you can mourn a person. Spend time together, do things you enjoy, be silent together and search God’s Word for comfort and strength – both together and on your own. Feel free to also share with close family, friends, your pastor or a Christian counsellor.

*-Wendy Kittlitz*

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