

## Abortion is a men's issue, too

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by Brian Fisher

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We live in a culture in which sexual responsibility and its consequences are responsibilities largely placed on women. This Father's Day, let's stop talking about abortion and sexual responsibility solely as women's issues and recognize that they're men's issues, too.

The unfair reality is that keeping a pregnancy has far greater consequences for women than for men. More than 80% of single parents are mothers. Mothers are 40% more likely than fathers to say that childcare issues have inhibited their career. Women are eight times more likely than men to be the caretakers for sick children.

So, when a woman is faced with the "choice" to keep or end a pregnancy, is it any wonder that many women feel it is not really a choice at all?

As the president of a nonprofit organization that offers women alternatives to abortion, I can tell you that most women, when they come to us, believe abortion is their only option. Why? Because most have little to no emotional or financial support. Usually, the baby's father is not supportive of keeping the pregnancy or is out of the picture completely. Some have no health insurance. Some wonder how they can afford childcare. Others already have other children and are already struggling to make ends meet. Many are burdened with a sense of loneliness that feels crippling.

“Pro-choice” activists argue that abortion empowers women because it allows them to "dismiss" a pregnancy in the same way men often do. I would like to present an alternative. Rather than continue to fight for such a false sense of equality, why don't we instead hold men accountable for the outcomes of their sexual behavior?

Legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon argued that abortion “does not liberate women; it frees male sexual aggression.” Abortion is the ultimate get-out-of-jail-free card for men with noncommittal sex lives. But men have a duty to speak out on the issue of abortion. They also have a right to do so, even if some women's groups claim otherwise. In the same way, men have a right and a duty to parent their children and to support their expectant partners financially and emotionally.

Men: If your partner is pregnant, don't walk away. Make the right choice (the honorable choice, the sacrificial choice) to protect your children and the mother of your children.

If we want to preserve human dignity and respect all human life, our society needs to address men's role in sexuality and unplanned pregnancy. And this Father's Day, we as a society should challenge men to step up as fathers and expectant fathers and as sexual partners, boyfriends, and husbands.

My message to men is to educate yourselves on the options for expectant parents. There *are* resources available for pregnant couples — I know because the organization I serve offers them, and many others do as well. We offer life-affirming, holistic, comprehensive medical care; financial, emotional, and spiritual support services; job training and job placement; housing and childcare assistance; and more.

Men, you need to be aware that these resources exist, so that if your partner becomes pregnant, you have the knowledge to support her. You also need to be aware that abortion has physical risks, including infection and prolonged bleeding, according to the Mayo Clinic. Emotional risks also abound.

If there's one thing we have learned from the events of the past several months, it is that every human being has value and a right to live. As a society, we must value women enough to want to bring about true equality and medical care. Men play a vital, integral role in bringing children safely into the world by being educated, involved, and supportive of the courageous women carrying new life.

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