



JUSTICE & RIEKIE VAN DER BERG

Who is Riekie van der Berg?

Meet Riekie, the founder of SA Cares for Life. In 1993 she started the Neo Birth Pregnancy Care Centre, a crisis counselling service. Riekie has been involved with the opening of more than 70 similar centres around the country. In 1994 House Esther was opened – a home for destitute pregnant mothers. Since then SA Cares for Life has expanded to include divisions such as ABBA Adoptions and ABBA nursery, Cluster Care through which families affected by HIV/AIDS are given support and Africa Cares for Life. This is really a very short summary of all the work being done through SA Cares for Life, for more detail go to the website: www.sacares.co.za.

Riekie is married to Justice, and they have 4 children. God led them to adopt their youngest daughter as a baby, she is completing matric this year.

We asked Riekie how this ministry was started

In 1983 Riekie was working as a social worker, she witnessed an abortion which led to much guilt, anger and tears. She was broken and sought God for His answer to this problem. His answer was:

1. for those involved to take responsibility, and
2. to ask for, and experience, God's forgiveness

In September 1993, Riekie was given this mandate from God: “do something now against abortion, do what I would have done”.

Out of this, God led Riekie to develop 7 principles on which SA Cares for Life is based. These are characteristics which Christ displayed in His ministry:

1. Unconditional love and acceptance of everyone
2. To be the Good Samaritan who displayed compassion from the heart, as compared to the priest and Levite who judged and walked past. The Samaritan made a sacrifice – he put the man on his own donkey and paid for him at the Inn. To love with compassion requires sacrifice.

The Samaritan bound the man's wounds with wine (representing knowledge), oil (being led by the Holy Spirit) and bandages (love).

3. Esther 4. Esther was called to take action to save the Hebrew people, her response was “If I die, so be it”, just as Christ was willing to make the necessary sacrifice.

4. Christ was led by the Father. Decisions had to be made according to God's purpose and plan for each person and baby.
5. Deuteronomy 31. God gave His people a choice, whether it be life or death. Each person who needs help is given information and advice, but still has their own free will in making choices.
6. Psalm 139: Each baby, and person, is made according to God's plan.
7. Christ displayed compassion to the woman caught in adultery. The focus must be on bringing people to Christ, not on their sin.

Riekie's heart is for women to have a place of restoration and healing.

We were interested to know what Riekie has learnt personally over the past 15 years.

The response was 'WOW, so much!'"

The first thing is that if you give your hurt to the Lord, He can make it into your ministry. No matter how small, we can use the healing we have received to help someone else.

The second is to wait on God's timing, if you have a burden for something specific, then pray and wait for the Lord's plan and time to put the burden into action.

The third is to submit to (you can substitute 'cooperate with') your husband, you are a team and are stronger when you work together.

How can you get involved?

There is a constant need for volunteers at the various centres, as well as food, clothes and financial donations. You could also sponsor a family for a low monthly amount. All details and areas of need are also on the website. Now is the time to put love into action!