

# Shiloh Ministry Testimonies

Shiloh was a safe haven---- to be honest, to talk with women who understood, to walk it together, to be inspired by women who had come through it (our leaders). It was a place to unload, to release, to cry, and to laugh. It was the only place I felt connection (secondary infertility). And most importantly, I could wrestle with my feelings and questions toward God about why this was happening, and what to do. The workbook and scripture study pulled me through many hard times, and when I finally got pregnant, helped me through a miscarriage as well. It took lots of pressure off my husband as well, to be my only resource and help. That really helps the marriage. - Cristin

*I went to the Shiloh group because I wanted support from women my age that are going through the same thing. It was a hard decision for me to go, but after talking to my counselor about it, I decided to give it a try. The reason it was hard to sign up for the group was that I was in denial for a long time- I didn't want the label of "infertile". Every month I kept thinking I was going to get pregnant or our adoption would go through, so I kept delaying signing up. I thought the group was going to be depressing, but it has proven to be just the opposite. After the first meeting I wished I had joined the group sooner. It exceeded my expectations.*

*The group has been incredibly helpful, both emotionally and spiritually. After being in depression for several months I'm finally "living" again. I love that the group is a comfortable place to talk about what sometimes feels like the "elephant in the room" with my friends and acquaintances.*

*The workbook has gotten me in the Word and in prayer much more consistently. It's really helped point me to the truth and given me a lot of peace during this difficult time. Before going through the study I was mostly running from God and his Word because I didn't want to hear "just wait and trust", but through this study I've been reminded of God's amazing love for me and I now have a greater level of trust and peace that I didn't have before. - Tara*

I was very lost and full of emotion after my first miscarriage. I wasn't even sure I wanted children when it happened, so it was extremely confusing for me to process. I felt like all my friends and family just didn't "get it" and I would continually get my feelings hurt when I opened up. I was looking for a group that could help me discuss these feelings without getting hurtful words.

At first I didn't want to go to the group because I had a lot of reservations on sharing this deep, very emotional pain with a group of strangers. I didn't know if I had any room in my heart to hear stories similar or harder than mine and be able to get through each day without an overflow of emotions from carrying those stories and mine. I also didn't want to keep hearing "God is good" and people expect that to make my heart stop aching. It wasn't that simple.

But after I had shared my story and heard other stories that first night I was comforted instead of overwhelmed. Just sharing that information started a bond with the group. Plus, everyone in my group was extremely authentic and shared my anger with God. It made me feel safe to discuss my true feelings.

Shiloh was an amazing turning point in my life. I was able to work through my emotions around the miscarriage. I decided that being a mom was a role I wanted in my life and now have a beautiful little boy. The ability to talk with others about my feelings really helped me clarify things when talking to my husband. Our relationship became stronger. I have life-long friends from the group who I still see every other week. I've been able to relate to other women going through infertility, comfort them with words and hugs, and guide them toward the group. And the best part is I became a follower of Christ shortly after Shiloh ended. The program helped me heal many wounds with the Lord. Shiloh has been part of my path to find Him. - Kristina

I decided to go to the Shiloh group because I wanted a specific time set apart to deal with this infertility issue, so that it wouldn't creep into every other aspect of life. I wanted a healthy outlet for thoughts, questions, feelings and medical information and experience with fellow believers who have the same biblical context for decision making and struggles. I wanted to feel known and understood without having to teach people how to know and understand my situation. I wanted to learn more about what scripture says about these matters.

It was hard to sign up, not knowing who would be there and facing the lack of anonymity, but it wasn't hard after the first night. Everyone was clearly kind, "got it," and was struggling with similar issues, and so

confidentiality was not a concern. I found all the things that I was looking for through this group, plus the panel helped my husband to get more context of what other people are dealing with, how the struggle affects others, marriages, etc. Panel night also helped him to figure out some additional treatments questions he had. The book resources are awesome, and Scripture memorization has been awesome for me to go back and recite the verses to myself when I'm upset or struggling. And it's just good in general to know what the scriptures say. The issue of God's will was made understandable to me in a new way. It's helped my marriage through a better understanding of how husbands, in general, deal with and think about these issues – in terms of how they are often years behind their wives in the emotional impact, and in terms of how they focus on specific issues. The workbook helped me to write out prayers, document where I currently am emotionally in the struggle, helped me to focus on making marriage what it is supposed to look like, even during the struggle, and to make it fun as well. It helped to show me where I had followed a good decision making process, and point out other areas where I needed to do a little more to feel like I was ready to make certain decisions. It helped me to understand better what God wants for us through reading the stories in the bible and through reading the New Testament instruction on being joyful, praying, etc. - Kelly

I was interested in Shiloh because I wanted to meet others that were going through the same struggles and I wanted my heart/mind to feel at peace about the situation that we were going through. What was hard about signing up was I didn't want to admit that I couldn't handle this situation on my own, I didn't want people to know that we were in this situation, but I felt much better after I was there and met everyone. I usually looked forward to going because of the fact that everyone in the room knew what you were going through and we could ask questions about others thoughts, treatments, doctors but most importantly for specific prayer requests that only we could understand!

Through my time in the Shiloh study, I changed my attitude about my situation. I came to realize that this is out of my control and even though we are still waiting on God's perfect timing we are still giving Him all the glory! I realized that it is ok to let others in even though they may not say the correct thing and may possibly hurt your feelings with the "wrong" words. I enjoyed doing the workbook on my own and being able to cry over scripture when I needed. I also shared my workbook with my prayer partner and I really enjoyed getting her thoughts on the scripture, questions and my answers. I still have my workbook and I love that I'm able to go back and find those encouraging words that I still need after 4 years of fertility treatments! - Jessica

I started attending the Shiloh group after my second miscarriage. I needed a place where people understood my suffering and longing for a child. I was searching for a place where others understood my hopelessness, but what held me back at first was I thought that my losses were not as "bad" as others; therefore I didn't have a place in the group. (I was completely wrong.) After I went the first night, I was surprised at how comfortable I was. It helped that I knew one of the leaders during the semester I attended. I was also touched by everyone's story and support. I couldn't wait for the next week.

Through my time in the Shiloh study I was able to praise God in the midst of my suffering. That was a huge lesson for me. I also learned to rely on His timing instead of my own. I built some friendships during the group that have now blossomed. I don't know what I would do without these ladies in my life. Through our struggle, my husband and I became very close. We leaned on each other and helped each other during the difficult time. He helped me focus on God's love. I grew exponentially as a person during the study. Miscarriages forever change you. Shiloh did as well, for the better. My faith and walk with God was strengthened. - Loyce

*I came to Shiloh because I needed prayer, and friendships with people who actually understood me. When they asked me how I was doing, they meant it in a way my "fertile friends" did not understand. I was hoping to gain new friendships with couples struggling like we were. I looked forward to Shiloh every week and cried when it was over, because it was hard to imagine not seeing everyone weekly. The Shiloh study reminded me that God is my biggest advocate. It impacted my relationship with Christ in a way I will be forever grateful for. It brought out amazing conversations with my husband and helped us in our decision making by remembering that what we decide is for us and us alone; I don't need others approval. Our marriage benefitted from Shiloh because we were able to talk about difficult things. I thought we had gone about as deep as you can, then I went to Shiloh and entered a closer bond with my husband than I could have ever imagined. **Megan***

I came to the Shiloh group because I was feeling alone and isolated. I was going through heartaches and emotions that most people (family, friends, coworkers) didn't understand. I wanted to meet with a group of women going through similar circumstances so I didn't feel so alone or crazy. At first I hesitated a bit in coming because I was thinking that maybe the emotions were all in my head but I stuck with it and during lesson two things started to sink in and I was able to break through my anger.

Because of Shiloh, I know that God is not punishing me. Shiloh helped me to feel comfortable in telling our families about our struggles. My relationship with my husband has only strengthened through Shiloh. I would do some of the lessons with my husband; he was able to see and hear what I was going through and I think it even helped him with his grief. I have strength because of my faith in God, and I have perseverance and hope because suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character; and character, hope!! **Shannon**

*I came to Shiloh to learn scriptures to help me deal with the up and down emotions associated with infertility. I was also looking for people who understand what I am going through so I would not feel like the only person going through this struggle.*

*The workbook gave me a good scriptural basis for understanding and managing my emotions in the situation. This scripture has given me comfort and validated my feelings. I liked that Shiloh covered a broad range of topics, including decision making, so I could think about things before I am blindsided by a situation I encounter. It also gave me an easy way to start a conversation with my husband about things we don't usually discuss like how we are dealing with emotions/experiences differently. **Katie***

I came to Shiloh for comfort. Comfort from being in God's word and also from the women in the group. From the first class I knew I had made the right decision. These women got me and I am so grateful to have them as friends now. I live all the way in Frisco and I hesitated to sign up because the location was so far away, but I am glad that I signed up. The drive was well worth it for what I walked away with.

After the first meeting, when we shared all of our stories, I had a very hard time coming back. Our journey has been hard and it scared me to think about what else could happen to us. The anxiety was hard for me at the beginning, but I am so glad I went back. The Lord showed me that everyone's journey is different, but that no matter the story, His glory will shine through in the end. Shiloh is something I will never regret doing. I have made friendships that have blessed me so much and they have allowed me to share my joy and peace with my husband through our journey. **Ashley**

*I came to Shiloh because I needed reassurance that the feelings I was feeling were okay. I needed support and encouragement. It was difficult to come because it's hard to admit there's a problem in the first place. But it was very encouraging when I was there. I always left feeling empowered to tackle the next challenge that I could possibly face*

*The first few weeks it was like opening a wound I had kept hidden for a long time... But I know it was good for things to be out in the open and exposed. I needed that time in the Word and the encouraging verses. I don't feel like I have to hide under a rock anymore with friends and even in my marriage. I feel more open and able to handle my emotions better. **Lisa***

I came to Shiloh trying to find a healthy way of healing. I felt like everyone around me was moving forward with their lives and I was just stuck. I thought it would be helpful to surround myself with others who could truly relate and to be encouraged through scripture. At first I was nervous that because I wasn't familiar with scriptures I wouldn't fit in. Now I realize that was just a ridiculous thought. Never once did I feel like I didn't belong! Also, I was afraid that it would just be a weekly reminder of where I was and make me sad but it did the complete opposite. Shiloh lifted me up in spirit because of the support from the group and the study content we reviewed.

The study encouraged me to be honest with myself and others about how I was really feeling. It helped me recognize that I have areas I need to focus on more in the healing process. My eyes were opened to see that I'm not alone and it's ok to be sad/mad but not to let it consume me. I came closer to God by reading scripture and reflecting on it; something I had never done before Shiloh. Memorizing bible verses has helped get me through the day to day struggle. And now I have a group I can message at anytime to vent to, ask for prayers, and laugh with. **Anonymous**

**If you would like more information about this ministry, please contact [shiloh@watermark.org](mailto:shiloh@watermark.org), or Holly Thames at Watermark Community Church 214-239-8865. For additional information, please see our link on the Watermark website, [www.watermark.org](http://www.watermark.org).**