

WHEN LABOR BEGINS

RECOGNIZING TRUE LABOR

IS THIS LABOR?

You may not recognize the actual start of your labor. For many women, contractions come and go over a period of days or weeks before actual labor begins. This is normal and expected.

If contractions on and off for days is normal, how do you know when you are actually in real labor? There are a few things you can look for to help you determine what is going on.

First, don't pay attention to the contractions until they demand your attention. Although you may not recognize the moment you move from early labor to

active labor, you will recognize the difference between short, mild contractions and the ones that make you stop walking. If you can ignore the contractions, do.

Next, pay attention to how your body responds to physical changes. If your contractions stop when you get up and walk, sit to rest, get a drink or eat something you are experiencing the normal "before" labor contractions. Try to ignore them and go about your day.

Finally, if you think you are in labor and want to check, pay attention to five or six

contractions. See how far apart they are and how long they last. Then, in a few hours pay attention to five or six more. If you are actually moving toward active labor the contractions should be closer together and last longer. You will also notice the intensity of the contractions has increased.

One last important point, your contractions need to be lasting at least sixty seconds in order to make real changes in your cervical dilation. If your contractions are shorter than sixty seconds, just ignore them.

GOD'S TIMING

God's timing is perfect. He knows what you need before you ask, the right time for your baby to be born. He even knows the right amount of labor for your baby.

God provided seven years of great prosperity for the Egyptians which were enough to feed them through the years of famine. It was the job of Joseph to devise a strategy that allowed the best use of the

grain. The food was provided, but with poor stewardship it could have been easily wasted. God did not take the Egyptians out of the famine, he provided for them despite the famine.

In the same way, God will not take you out of your labor. You will need to experience the time of building pressures and intensity. In the right timing, God will also

provide you with tools to help you handle labor. He will give you what you need when you need it, even if it doesn't seem to be when you thought it should have been available.

Trust God, let him be in control of the timing of your labor. Let him decide how fast or how slow it should happen. Spend your energy working with the things God has provided for you during labor,

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

- *Ecclesiastes 3:1-5*
There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plan and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain
- *Isaiah 66:9*
Do I bring to the moment of birth and not give delivery?" says the LORD. "Do I close up the womb when I bring to delivery?" says your God.
- *Psalms 22:9*
Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast.
- *Psalms 31:15*
My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.
- *Psalms 56:3*
When I am afraid, I will trust in you.
- *Psalms 90:12*
Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.
- *Psalms 29:11*
The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.