Episode Transcript

Sonja van Rossen & Lexy Bourne, *Hosts*

Episode 19: “Interview with Brianna Graham on Infertility and Miscarriage”

Brianna Graham is a pastor’s wife from Lowood, Queensland. She is a qualified medical scientist majoring in pathology, but has decided to be a stay-at-home wife during this season of her life. She spends her days supporting her husband, Ben, in ministry and caring for their caboodle, Max.

Tuesday, 27th February, 2024

Sonja: Today's guest is Brianna Graham from Lowwood, Queensland. Brianna's the wife of Pastor Ben Graham, and she has bravely volunteered to come on our podcast today to share her journey with infertility and miscarriage. I know there are a lot of women out there suffering similar struggles, so this is a very important topic to talk about. Welcome, Brianna.

Brianna: Hi. Thank you for having me.

Sonja: And hello Lexy as well.

Lexy: Hello.

Sonja: So, Brianna, let's jump in. Tell us a little bit about yourself. How long have you been where you are right now? In Lowwood.

Brianna: So, Lowwood, for those of you who don't know, because I didn't know when I first heard of it, is in the Somerset region. And if you don't know where that is, it's near the Lockyer Valley. And if you don't know where that is, it's an hour inland of Brisbane. So we moved to Lowwood from Adelaide at the beginning of 2022. So this is our third year here, and it's also our third year in the ministry. So this is Ben's first placement.

Sonja: So tell us a little bit about your immediate family.

Brianna: Well, it's a bit topical to what we're talking about today. I don't have any children yet, but I am the youngest of three and my siblings and I were all married. We all go to church, but we all go to different denominations. I met Ben in Bundaberg in Queensland through a mutual friend when he was working as an industrial chemist at Bundaberg Sugar. And, yes, we don't have any “children” children, but we have a dog and his name is Max.

Sonja: What sort of dog?

Brianna: He's a caboodle and he's absolutely gorgeous.

Sonja: Cute. And you've mentioned what Ben was doing and what he does. What do you do or what have you studied in?

Brianna: So at the moment, I'm just a stay at home wife. I am a qualified medical scientist and I majored in pathology when we lived in Adelaide. While Ben was studying for the ministry, I used to work at a private pathology lab in Adelaide. So while we lived there for Ben’s studies, that was when I was working.

Lexy: Why haven't you continued to stay in that field?

Brianna: When we were preparing to move, I decided that I didn't want to look for work straight away because I do struggle with change. And I knew that moving to a new place, I wanted to give myself time to settle in, to get used to the environment, discover our new hometown and the new church family that we were going to be involved with. And I didn't want to add any stress to that. And we are blessed that I do not need to work for financial reasons, so I don't need to work for an income. And then once I settled in, I still found plenty of stuff to do. And I thought, I don't want to get into the workforce because it takes you time to get to know the place, and particularly in the science field, you have to get to know the procedures and the machines and equipment that you use. And I didn't want to get all that and just get into the flow of things and then tell them that I was going to be taking maternity leave in a few months. I also thought that not working would lower my stress levels and help us get on the right foot of starting a family.

Sonja: And on a different topic, did you grow up Lutheran?

Brianna: No, I grew up Presbyterian. I did go to a Lutheran primary school that had weekly chapel services and that is actually the church where I learned the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles Creed. I learnt the Ten Commandments at my Presbyterian church. So if you think about it from a catechesis standpoint in the Lutheran church, I did two thirds of my catechesis in my primary school years. But I obviously had to start thinking

about the Lutheran church in a more comprehensive and serious matter when I was dating a [Lutheran] pastor-to-be. But that was a very incredible journey for my faith. It makes you really question when you've been raised in a certain sort of form of believing in things, you just sort of accept them. And then when you see them from a different way and realise these Christians cannot all be damned, like, they can't be doing anything too wrong either. Why do they do the things that they do, and why do I do the things that I do? So yes, it was a really good learning curve, really good journey. And it's a continual journey.

Sonja: Yes, for sure. I think it is for everyone.

Brianna: Yes. And I think it should be. You never want to say that you've learned everything.

Sonja: Even those of us that call ourselves Lutheran.

Lexy: We all hope that next year we will be one year wiser and more knowledgeable in our faith and in the Lord and in the Scriptures. So you want to keep growing.. If you stop growing, then something's wrong.

Sonja: So when you got together with Ben, did you start attending a Lutheran church with him then?

Brianna: I did. Unfortunately, we didn't actually get to hang out much before he left for South Australia, which is another completely different story. You don't need to hear that one right now. But I thought to myself, something I could do is once a month I could go to the Lutheran church, because I had been going with Ben while he lived in Bundy, you know, every now and then. But I didn't make many close relationships there in those infrequent visits, so I ended up sticking with my church, which was a church plant at the time, because I think they needed that support.

Lexy: So if you're happy to jump into the topic of your miscarriage and your journey on trying to conceive. So what has your journey looked like so far? How long have you been trying to conceive?

Brianna: So we've been trying to conceive since about mid 2021. When we married in 2018, I was only 22 years old, so I was not ready. I mean, other people might be at that age, but for me personally, I was not ready to start trying for a family straight away. It took a lot of prayer and trust in God and his plans for us as a family unit for me to come good with the idea of falling pregnant and having a family.

Lexy: And in what way did you find out that there was a problem and that there were issues with you trying to conceive?

Brianna: So it had been some time of trying, but I wasn't too concerned at that point. But then one day, while we were still at the Lutheran College in Adelaide, I fell pregnant. And I would not have realised had I not done a test at home, because – and throughout this interview, I'm going to try and be as articulate and accurate as I can without hiding things, but I don't want to be too gruesome or graphic either – but I had some spotting that was at an unusual time in my cycle, and I thought, oh, well, next time I'm able to, I'll do a pregnancy test. And so I went to chapel with Ben, as I did most mornings at the college, and all I could think about was, am I pregnant? Is this implantation bleeding? Because when you've been waiting a while, you start to do a bit of research into that sort of thing. So I had some idea of what it could

have been, but I didn't know what it was. And I hate not knowing things. I'm a scientist. I like to research things and figure them out and have a plan. So after that, Ben had a class and I was drinking water and waiting, and he came back for lunch and I went and took an at home pregnancy test. And I could not believe my eyes when it was positive. And it was such a shock. Even though I had been tracking my ovulation and I knew that we were actively pursuing pregnancy, it had not happened for so long that I didn't actually expect it to work. And I just stumbled down the stairs with this pregnancy test in my hand, in tears, to Ben, and he just took it and put it aside and hugged me. And I was like, Ben... I couldn't get the words out and I showed it to him and our life changed from that point on. Unfortunately, once you have your positive test you have to go to the doctor and they give you an initial set of blood work, and I got that done. It was very difficult because I have a needle phobia, but I knew I had to get it done, and all of those things came back good. And then they give you a follow up one to keep an eye on your HCG, your pregnancy hormone. And when I went back to get the results of that follow up test, we found out that I had miscarried very early on, so it was only about four weeks. And I don't know if that was four weeks gestation versus the other one. There's different terms that get me confused, and that was really, really hard because my GP said to me, 'Don't worry about it. It wasn't even a real baby. Just try again next time.'

Sonja: They call it a chemical pregnancy, I think, which makes it sound so depersonalised.

Brianna: Yes. So the chemical being they've picked up on test-wise, but there was nothing yet available visually or any other way to confirm it. Yes, that is called a chemical pregnancy. And that was a really hard time because I just assumed that the bleeding I was having, you look that up as well, and they say some bleeding is normal. Try not to panic. If you're not in pain or you're not bleeding x amount, don't worry about it. And I was astonished. I bawled and I cried and cried to Ben because I'd been flushing my baby down the toilet and I didn't even know. Or throwing it in the bin or who knows what. So that was our first experience. And since then, nothing had happened until it got to the three year point where I said to Ben, under the counsel of my psychologist, I think I need to go and actually get this sorted out once and for all. So we both went to my GP and what it's like, the husband gets one or two little tests and the wife gets a list of all these investigations they need to get done. And at the moment, I'm working with my GP and an endocrinologist, and they have so far found out that I have polycystic ovarian syndrome, or PCOS. And there's also the potential for there to be endometriosis, but the only surefire way to diagnose that is through surgery. And I would like to avoid that if I can, just because even though there's minimal risks associated with doing damage or causing more infertility, I know that's just a low risk, but it's not one that I'm willing to take just yet.

Lexy: So how many miscarriages have you ended up having?

Brianna: So we've had two. The first one I just spoke about. And the thing is, had I not done that test at home, that bleeding that I had from the miscarriage would have happened around the same time as my period, so I would have been none the wiser. So I made a new rule for myself. No more tests until you're late. That was just something that I did for myself to help me

with my mental state of mind. And, yes, that was late 2021. And just last October, the end of last year, I went through what they call a silent, or a missed miscarriage, where the foetus passes away but the body doesn't remove it. So that was rough, because I had had some more bleeding again, but it wasn't as bad as the first time. So I just assumed, it's not too bad if it's still happening tomorrow, we'll follow up on it. It was a Saturday evening. There was not going to be anybody open anyway, and I wasn't going to emergency. I did have a little bit of pain, but the next day, on a Sunday morning, when Ben is obviously busy, I decided to go on to health direct, which is, I think it's a government website where you can put in your symptoms and it will suggest to you whether or not you should see a doctor or go to hospital or go to emergency. And it suggested that I headed to emergency straight away. And I thought, I don't want to go by myself and Ben's preaching, so I waited for him to come back and I said to him, look, I rang the health direct people and they said, we just don't like to take chances with bleeding and pain, especially when you have a history, even if it's small. And so he agreed to take me to the emergency room in Brisbane. There is an emergency that's closer to home, but they specifically recommended a women's hospital. So I thought we'd better just do what they say, otherwise I could waste time going to another hospital just to be turned back sort of thing. So we went there and it was horrible because, like I said, I have a fear of needles, and they had to do that. And it took them an exceptionally long time to get the test results. But I went in there for a scan and the lady said, I can see you have one viable pregnancy implanted in the right spot and there's a heartbeat. Would you like to see it?

Sonja: Wow.

Brianna: And I said yes, hoping that would make me feel better. And she turned the screen around and I looked at it and I didn't feel that rush of relief, and 'oh, I can see my baby. I'm so happy. It's healthy'. There was none of that. I still felt really anxious and stressed and I felt really bad about that. And that was a struggle that I went through. But they discharged me and said, follow up with your routine scans as usual. We can't see anything wrong at this stage. They did say there was a small hematoma there, so some bleeding, but they said that that can be normal and not to worry about it. So we went on with our lives and we told the family that we were expecting, even though we hadn't hit the twelve week mark yet. And everyone was, of course, happy for us. And then I noticed that my morning sickness started to improve and I was a little bit suspicious, but I said to myself, I just got to take this win and roll with it and hopefully it'll be all good. And we went for my eight week scan and we were told that there was no heartbeat. And at that point, I suppose I had built it up in my head that it was a possibility that this would happen because it's happened before. And the lady left to go and get the doctor and I looked at Ben and I said, 'I'm sorry'. And he was 'No, it's all right. It's not your fault or anything.' I was expecting for that news to really bring me to tears or something, but I just felt sort of almost numb. I want to explain how I feel because I don't want people to think that there's a specific way that they need to respond to things. It doesn't make you a bad mother if you don't feel joy around every prospect of your pregnancy going well, and utter sadness for every part that doesn't. It's an individual journey. So the doctor came back and said to us, you have three options. And the first one

was to just wait and see, wait for the body to catch on. As the HCG hormone begins to come down, the body might figure out what's going on and expel the pregnancy on its own, which is the option that I initially went through. The second option was medication, and the third was surgical intervention, which is a DNC, or dilation and curettage. I wanted to avoid that if I could, because, again, even though it's low risk, they're still poking around in sensitive places and there is a chance that they could cause some damage. But I opted to wait. And I waited a month from when I found out and nothing had happened. And it was coming up to that time of year for Christmas, and we had family events to go to, and I didn't want to be worried about something happening during that time. And I still also had pregnancy symptoms. I still had mild morning sickness. I still had fatigue. All the other wonderful things that come with pregnancy, because that hormone was still high. So I opted later on to go for the medication route, which was tricky, because it's abortion medication and I'm not here to talk about abortion, but it was something that I had decided that I would never do. And when I had those pills in my hand and realised what they were, I was like, I just can't believe that I'm going to be putting these into my body. But we had checked once, twice, thrice. There was definitely no sign of life down there. And I had a midwife that was looking after me through all of this and she prepared me for the worst. And it was not as bad as the worst, thankfully, praise God. So it was unpleasant. It was not a good experience, but I was able to do it in the comfort of my own home. I didn't have to go to hospital and be monitored or anything like that.

Lexy: May I ask, did the miscarriage happen quite quickly, like, over a course of a few hours, and then the bleeding takes a while to settle down, like a week or two or three weeks? Or did the miscarriage go on over a couple of days?

Brianna: So I asked my midwife if she could help me figure out when it might have happened, between when I had the scan that said that everything was okay and the scan that said things were not okay and it would have happened within that week. I had a little bit of spotting, but I had already had a bit of that, which is why I went to emergency in the first place. But that ended up disappearing for a bit. It started to come back and I thought, maybe I won't have to take the medication. But the midwife said to me, this can go on for weeks and weeks and weeks if you don't do something. So I took the medication. I think it was within 3 hours, the contractions start, and I was informed of what to expect and what to see, and the contractions started. I went to the bathroom and I didn't realise it at the time, but in hindsight, I probably passed the pregnancy with that first bout of contractions and then the bleeding continued.

Sonja: So the medication causes contractions?

Brianna: It does, yes, I think that's basically what it does. When you take these pills for abortion, you're often told to take them with something else that helps loosen the pregnancy from the wall of the uterus. I didn't have to take that. This would just bring on the contractions and it's almost like a teeny tiny little labour. Yes.

Sonja: How awful.

Brianna: Yes.

Lexy: That's one thing that surprised me about miscarriage. My first pregnancy, when we first got married, ended in a miscarriage and I was surprised that you actually do go into labour. It's like a mini labour. And I was only about ten weeks, but, yes, the contractions are real.

Brianna: Yes. I don't want people to be particularly afraid of that. I was not screaming in pain or anything like that. I tend to have quite bad period pain as it is. And for me it just felt like a really bad period. But I was only sevenish weeks along and once you get to a certain point, they don't recommend that you take the medication anyway, so they would be directing you straight to surgery. So I would hope that no doctor would prescribe this to you in a case where it would be so horrible to the point that you should be in hospital. But that was a warning they gave me. They said, if you can't manage your pain with panadol and nurofen, they even prescribed me codeine, which I didn't need to take. Thankfully. If, they said, you cannot manage that pain, you come to hospital and we'll look after you. So there's always a backup. They had a plan in place for me which made me feel comfortable.

Lexy: Yes, I had that backup plan as well. And the hospital that I went through was very supportive and, yes, I like what you said that women don't need to fear a miscarriage, even though it is not nice emotionally and spiritually and physically. I didn't need any pain relief for it. Though I know that not every woman is the same and that everyone's story may be different. So as you were going through all these challenges, and as you were going through trying to conceive and then having your miscarriages, what thoughts and feelings were you experiencing?

Brianna: I was really struggling on a faith relationship with God at this point because Ben and I had been praying for years that we trust that when you give us a pregnancy, that it will be in your good time and that it will be when we are truly ready. To have it taken away from you, you can't help but wonder why. And I was absolutely questioning, saying, “you're wrong, you shouldn't have done that,” but I was desperately seeking answers as to why he did it. Am I not ready? Is there something I have to do? Are you trying to tell me something? And I'm just not listening or not figuring it out. I was on my bed crying, and crying tears and crying out to God, what is it that you want? Why are you doing this? So that was very difficult. And to this day, I don't think he's actually answered me. But we've come to a bit of a truce, I suppose you could say, that I'm at peace with where we're at at the moment. And since the miscarriage, I just couldn't help but feel like that what I'd experienced could somehow be helpful for someone else. And that's why I'm here. So perhaps the reason for it was so that we could do this episode. I don't know, but it's important, I think when you're in those moments of mourning and grief and pain that it's okay to not understand things and to not make decisions. It's okay to just be unsure and just give yourself time to heal.

Lexy: And even though you were having these, you had feelings of anger towards God and you were questioning him. How did God comfort you through this difficult journey?

Brianna: So there's a lot of unpredictability, even through this small amount of pregnancy that I've encountered, because it's so different for everybody. And like I said, I'm a scientist. I like having control over things and being able to have predictable plans and timelines and schedules. It lowers my anxiety. It's a

coping mechanism. And everywhere I read was just, it's different for every woman. We can't tell you what it's going to be like. It's different for every woman. I had to trust in God every minute of every day, that he would sustain me and get me through that rough time. And as I was going through all of this, I continued to attend Bible studies and church services and things like that. Even though the last thing you feel like doing is talking to people and them asking you how you are, I still think it's very good to continue to immerse yourself in God's word and be with his people. And throughout that time, every service, every Bible study, I was picking up something that felt like it was directed at me and I would go onto my – I've got an ESV app and I could favourite or highlight or tag verses that struck me – so the first thing that struck me was Romans 8:28, which says, "and we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose". And I thought, this doesn't really feel like it's for my good. So does that mean I don't love God enough? And I don't think that's the reason, because there's no way that we can do anything that's enough. We don't earn our salvation. And then I thought, well, does that mean that this trial is for my good? And it might be, even if I don't understand why that is. But that was the beginning of, I feel, God speaking to me through this time. The next thing was Romans 5:3 says that we rejoice in our sufferings. I'm not sure if the writer Paul necessarily meant that you need to be happy about the suffering that you're experiencing. I think perhaps he meant it's important to continue to rejoice in the good things that you have, even amidst the suffering. And we can do that because we are assured of our salvation in Christ. We can look to baptism, we can look to the sacraments, all those wonderful Lutheran things, and not just explicitly Lutheran, but that is a large emphasis that Luther put on things like baptism, is that they bring comfort and assurance. I also think it's very easy for us to think that Jesus couldn't have faced all the trials we do today. You hear that Bible verse, he was tempted in every way or whatever it is. And I'm like, well, Jesus was a bloke. He obviously was never pregnant, he never miscarried. He lived in such different times. But God the father knows exactly how it feels for a child to die. And it was his only Son. And even though he knew that his Son would rise again on the third day, God is merciful. I don't expect him to raise my child on the third day or anything like that, but perhaps I will meet them in eternity. And I trust that wherever this child is or is going to be, that God's got it all under control. He loves his little ones.

Lexy: Yes. That's beautiful, Bri. I've actually got tears.

Sonja: I know. Me, too. I don't know how you're giving such a straight face. I'm like, "Don't cry, don't cry, don't cry".

Lexy: Yes, I'm crying.

Brianna: I'm sorry.

Lexy: No...

Brianna: I found a lot of time to think and reflect on what it is that I wanted, and for leaving myself open for God to speak to me about what he wants me to say, and yes - Christ's crucifixion! You remember it every Sunday or however often you see a crucifix or partake in communion, and it gets so easy for it to just wash over you and not particularly evoke any particular emotion or anything like that. It's just another Sunday. But he took on all sin so that he could defeat death, and he

has. And I take comfort in that. Whilst I couldn't do anything for my baby, he certainly got it all under wraps.

Lexy: That's right. One of the beautiful things that I have come to know about suffering is that it does give us a glimpse into what God goes through and what he experiences, especially Christ. He's the man of sorrows. And so, quite often when we're suffering, we comfort each other by saying – and it's true, it's completely true – that the Lord sees you and the Lord knows you, and that's completely true. But it kind of struck me just recently – I can't even remember what Bible passage it was, but I will look it up and I'll try and post it in the show notes – that our suffering actually connects us to Christ and it gives us basically a behind the scenes of what Christ went through regularly, every day, being the man of sorrows. And it helps us to understand him better as well, which I think is really beautiful. And I love how you've been able to approach this topic so beautifully.

Brianna: Thank you.

Lexy: So what comfort and advice do you have for women who are experiencing a similar journey?

Brianna: So I have a few Bible verses that I'll just briefly touch on while we're continuing to talk about our loving Father in heaven. Ben and our wedding Psalm was Psalm 136, partly because we liked what it said, but every second stanza is the repeated line for "His steadfast love endures forever". And we were having a wedding that didn't all have Lutherans that were used to responding to readings, so we thought this would be great. All the other people can figure out how to do the response, and it'll be the same line, it'll be good. But his steadfast love does endure forever, and it's for all of us. Psalm 139 starts with, "O Lord, you have searched me and known me," and continues with, "You are acquainted with all my ways". So he knows when we're suffering, he knows when we're feeling lost, and he knows what we need as well. So knowing that he is acquainted with all your ways and that he knows you, you know he's with you as well. Proverbs 16:9 says, "The heart of a man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps". So whilst we've tried to plan to be pregnant and have a family, it's not come to fruition yet. But you need to be careful that we don't try and take the reins. But let the Lord establish our steps.

Lexy: Yes.

Brianna: Isaiah 40:11 says, "He will tend to his flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs in his arms. He will carry them in his bosom and gently lead those that are with young". And that spoke to me, because whilst I'm not with young anymore, I was. But He gently leads them and He loves His children, and he will carry them in his bosom. And I just felt that was a beautiful depiction. Isaiah 54:10, "For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you". John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." These are all things that comforted me in my time of struggle. Romans 8:38-39, "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord". So those were a bunch of verses that I experienced and had read to me in that time of miscarriage. And it was just, I felt so seen. I even looked up

towards the heavens and I was like, I see what you did there, God. You had that there for me. And in all that trials and sufferings and uncertainty and questioning, I knew that he loved me, and I knew that he was with me, and I knew that he would not leave me. And I know now that he is still with me, so people can have faith and take comfort in that. But from a more secular kind of approach – I won't call it real world applications, because the Bible is very real and you can definitely apply it to the world, but – on a different sort of tone I always wanted a textbook answer. I wanted to look something up and get an answer. I'm sure many women have. How soon does morning sickness start? How long after bleeding does miscarriage occur? How painful is miscarriage? What does miscarriage look like at seven weeks? The answer is, it's different for everyone. So I think it's really important. I was blessed that I already had a support network. So if you have one, lean on them. If you don't, look into finding one. Family, friends, church. My GP was the one that got me in touch with a wonderful support network at my closest hospital. Like I said, the midwife in charge explained everything to me in as much or as little detail as I wanted, and she prepared me exceptionally well for the process. She was always just a phone call away if I had any questions. She called me to check how I was doing. She said, tell me when you're going to take the medication. I'll call you that day and see how you're going. If you don't have a church family but you would like prayer. I actually asked my husband, Ben, if someone completely random that you didn't know was seeking counsel or prayer, and they found your number and they called you and said, I am struggling. Would you pray for me? He said, yes. And I'm sure any pastor would be happy to do that for you.

Sonja: Definitely.

Brianna: So if that is something that you would like, please reach out. Another thing I'd like to tell women is that your mind will likely be an endless sea of thoughts. Constant, constant thoughts. What if I had done things differently? Did I do something wrong? Will I ever have kids? Do I even want kids anymore? When I was in the depths of all this, and I regret saying it now, but I said to Ben, I'm not sure if this is what I still want. I'm not sure if this suffering is worth it and if I'm ready to potentially face it again. But that's why you don't make decisions when you're hurting. So since then, I've changed my mind and realise this is actually something I really do want. And I'm willing to keep going ahead with that. But, yes, am I prepared? The possibility of going through this again to start a family? You're going to go through a lot of emotions and hormonal changes. And as hard as it is to wait for things to settle again, try not to make any big life altering decisions. Take some time at home, if you can, to heal mentally, physically, spiritually. You don't need to know the answers to these things, which if someone told me that, I'd be very angry with them. I don't need them, but I want to know. But you got to give it to God. We run into so much trouble when we try to run life our own way and not consider what he has in store for us. So I didn't have to worry about going to work. But if you can take time off work to just give yourself time to rest and recuperate, get back in touch with yourself, find hobbies that you enjoy again. Because when I was pregnant, every single day, all I thought about was, 'Is baby okay? Is what I'm doing okay for baby?' Yes. It's an adjustment to get back out of that style of thinking. Lastly, I suppose I would say that, put bluntly, miscarriage sucks. Even if you

might be relieved, perhaps because you miscarried and you realise that, hey, I'm not actually ready for this, and you feel relieved. Don't think that that's a bad thing to feel relief over the loss of a pregnancy. It's a hard, tumultuous thing to go through, and whatever you feel at the time is what you feel. I'm not relieved anymore, but I did definitely feel that relief because I felt so unwell and anxious because of this child. And then that was all taken away from me. So there was that relief and I'm still sad about it, but I'm just trying to say that those sorts of feelings are acceptable and you shouldn't beat yourself up about them if that's what you're going through. But miscarriage, it is manageable. And there are people that have been trained specifically to help you through these times, and they do it because they want to, hopefully, or something like that. But all the people that I know in gynaecology, midwifery, all that sort of thing, they are lovely people that care about you. And they've put in a lot of time and money and effort so that they can understand your body the best that they can, so that they can support you when times like this happen and when good times come round, too.

Lexy: And so, Bri, just so moving your advice. What advice do you have for people who know someone, who know a woman who is going through the same thing and what is something that they can say to these women that is actually encouraging and comforting, because I know that sometimes we want to be encouraging and we want to say something that will strengthen them, but sometimes it just comes out awkward.

Sonja: Or wrong.

Lexy: Or wrong. Yes, or wrong.

Brianna: Sometimes words just don't cut it. So there were some people that said to me, the whole rigmarole, I'm so sorry, blah, blah, blah. But then they said to me, if there's anything that we can do for you, just let us know. And I said, thank you very much. I don't know what that is just now, but if I think of something, I will let you know. And so that was comforting for me. I had some dear old ladies come up to me and said, I've been on the same boat. You're not alone. And then they share some of their faith journey with you. That can be comforting. Something specifically encouraging to say. I'm just trying to think, what would I like someone to say to me in that time? And I think just putting out there that you're thinking of them, that you're praying for them. If you feel so inclined and you've been through a similar situation, you can offer that, sort of, if they want advice or they just want you to listen to them. I think the biggest thing is just knowing that you are there to support them, should they need it.

Sonja: I was thinking it might be unhelpful to offer sort of fixes, or, why don't you try this? Or, why don't you try that?

Brianna: I think if they ask for that, then you could offer. But for me, I don't think that would have been helpful because there was no bringing baby back. That cannot be fixed. You just have to keep putting one foot in front of the other and letting all these people support you along the way. And they are offering their support because they want to, because they love you. I think more advice for women going through this is to be careful not to push people away. As nice as it might feel to isolate yourself and just not talk to people because it's too hard. You don't want to talk about your feelings, you don't want to talk about what's going on. Make sure that you don't completely isolate yourself. Time

to yourself is good. Ben and I needed time to ourselves to process things and get back on track. But completely isolating yourself from other people, that has only ever taken me down very dark roads.

Lexy: Well, Bri, thank you so much for just sharing your heart and your journey with us today. And we definitely pray that your transparency will bless many of our listeners, especially those who are going through or have been through a similar journey. So thank you Bri for joining us today.

Brianna: You're very welcome. That is my hope and prayer that this will be helpful for even just one person.