

# **The Breastfeeding Continuum: Mother and Baby As One**

By Sheila Kippley September 7th, 2008

Experts for years have stated that the presence of the mother is crucial to the development of her baby. This fact is usually ignored today in a world which values the mother in the workplace, but it needs to be heard.

Separation of mother and baby is commonly promoted in our society. After all, they say, babies must learn to be independent. The baby should not cling to its mother. Babies should learn to feed themselves with a bottle, pacify themselves with a pacifier, and sleep for the duration of the night. This form of parenting, when it works, is very convenient for the parents, especially the mother who thinks she needs time to do other things.

But is this what nature intended? Does God have anything to say about this in his plan for mothers and babies? Are mother and baby one unit or are they to be treated separately? Is the mother as physically close to her baby during breastfeeding, especially during the early years, as she is during pregnancy? Is there a natural biological oneness during breastfeeding as there was during pregnancy?

Many breastfeeding experts have stated YES to the last question, that breastfeeding is a continuation of pregnancy. The only change is that the baby is now outside the mother's body.

There are three physiologic similarities between the two: pregnancy and breastfeeding.

1) With both, the baby is physically close to the mother. With breastfeeding the baby is often carried on the mother's body or is in her arms, but now both can interact with each other.

2) As with pregnancy, the breastfed baby is still receiving all his nourishment from his mother and this lasts for about 6-9 months. After that time when other foods are slowly taken by the baby, the baby still receives much of his nutrition from his mother.

3) The mother remains in amenorrhea (no menstruation) during breastfeeding as well as during pregnancy. Normally a mother receives more months of amenorrhea from breastfeeding than she does from pregnancy if she is follow the natural mothering program or the Seven Standards of eco-breastfeeding.