

Kairos at birth: Insights in and around birthing

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Background: Contemporary birth has become frequently attuned to fear and positioned in medicalisation. Although the context of birth has changed over time and across cultures something meaningful about birth is lost and hidden in the experience when a newborn arrives.

Method: Using hermeneutic phenomenology stories from mothers, birth partners, midwives and obstetricians were interpreted.

Findings: The stories reveal an attuned-space, attuned-temporality, bodily attunement and a felt relational quality of gathering with others. The presence of others at birth are both seen and unseen, near and far and can include a sense of "holy-other". A contextual web of social, emotional and spiritual meanings coalesces and discloses birth as meaningful beyond what is normally spoken reminding those privileged to be at birth that birth is significant and a remembrance of our shared natality. The moment of birth is thus a special time named Kairos, a sacred joyful moment in life that brings forth deep meaningful insights. Findings and conclusions are presented in a way that invokes thinking about 21st century birth revealing hidden profound meaning.

Conclusion: The findings provide new interpretations on contemporary birth practices and professional disputes across all cultures. This study calls upon everyone to honour birth and shelter something precious and profoundly meaningful. These valuable insights have implications for all those involved in and around birth from education of health care professionals, social policy makers, childbirth researchers and women and families using the maternity services.

Ethical approval: Gained through Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee, New Zealand.