Dear Aliza,

“One boy and one girl” is the opinion of Beit Hillel in the Mishna. They derive this from the way Hashem created the world, with one male and one female. While the Talmud offers other opinions, including the one you mentioned, the Halacha follows Beit Hillel.

But did you ever throw a party and nobody showed up? Besides this minimal fulfillment of ‘Pru u’Rvu’ there’s a general mitzvah to populate the earth, which stems from the verse “The earth was not created to be desolate...” and applies to non­Jews as well. Hashem is our ‘host’ and desires lots of guests at the party!

In this age of DINKs (Double Income - No Kids) life is looked upon as a picnic where kids rain. I know someone who has 3 kids and 2 pianos. I asked him if he thinks about having more. Kids, that is. “More kids!” he said. “Are you kidding! Do you have any idea how much it costs for piano lessons alone!” In other words, “Give me Liberace or give me death.”

The Talmud describes having a child as a partnership involving mother, father and G-d. So, if you’re interested in a corporate venture with Hashem, ‘invest’ in as many ‘children-futures’ as you can.

However, having “as many children as you can” takes into consideration physical, emotional, and sometimes even financial factors. And some types of birth control are permitted in some cases. Suffice it to say that a Posek (Halachic authority) must be contacted regarding each specific case.

Of course, one benefit of having children is that you can brag about them — which reminds me of the following story: “Oy!” says a woman to her friend. “My son the doctor! He’s so good to me! He writes! He sends presents! He flies down to visit...”

“Oy, My son!” says the other. “He loves me so much!” He goes to a fancy therapist. There he pays 150 dollars an hour!

“Oy! My son!” says the first. “He writes! He sends presents! He flies down to visit...”. “Oy, My son!” says the other. “He loves me so much!”

He goes to a fancy therapist. There he pays 150 dollars an hour! And the whole time, who does he talk about...ME!!"

Sources:
- Talmud — Yeveomat 61b.
- Yeshaya 45, Psalms 127.128.
- Shulchan Aruch, Even Haezer 1:5, 1:8.

And each child gives you plenty of practice in the art of giving and loving, until hopefully you become an expert!

Dr. Wittenstein wrote: “A primary concern is indeed safety of the crew; NASA does everything possible to assure crew safety. However, it is high risk. Should something unforeseen occur, there is very little opportunity or time to repair it.”

Sources:
- World Wide Web: Ohr’s address is http://www.jer1.co.il/ohr/intro.html
- Fax and Regular Mail within Israel. Just send us a note requesting a subscription.
- E-Mail via Internet. To subscribe, send the message “sub ask [your full name]” to listproc@jer1.co.il
- Compuserve’s Religion Forum.
- Ask The Rabbi is available from several sources:
  - Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College
  - Jerusalem1 Gopher (gopher.jer1.co.il)

If you have E-Mail and a question, you can submit it to Ask The Rabbi for possible inclusion in a future edition. Just write your question using your E-Mail program, set the subject to “Ask The Rabbi” and send it to ohr@jer1.co.il. We can’t include all questions submitted, but we do try to respond to everyone.