

*Train up a child in  
the way he  
should go;  
even when  
he is old  
he will not  
depart from it.*

*- Proverbs 22:6*

*(ESV)*



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# Child Dedication



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# Child Dedication @ Our Church

Thank you for your interest in dedicating your child and may your family experience the fullness of God's blessings and His promise for eternal life.

## What is child dedication?

Child Dedication is not baptism or christening. It does not guarantee a child's salvation, however it is a public expression of the fact that your child belongs to God and you are making a declaration before God and those witnessing the ceremony of your commitment to raise your child to honor, respect and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dedication is a church tradition. It is not specifically taught or commanded in the Bible, in contrast to acts of baptism and participation in communion. An act of child dedication is a tradition that churches have developed to celebrate the birth or adoption of a child.

## What is the purpose of child dedication?

The word "dedicate" means to set aside or commit to a sacred purpose. In essence, then, dedication means committing a child to God and God's purposes for that child. In one sense, this is what every Christian parent wants to do, but in another sense, parents can't actually make this decision on behalf of their children – as much as they might wish to!

Each child, as he or she gets older, will eventually have to make his or her own personal decision to respond to the gospel about whether or not to commit himself or herself to God. Parents can guide, teach, pray for, and lead their children, but parents cannot choose salvation for their child.

So even though we speak of dedicating the child to the Lord, dedication is really a matter of the parents dedicating themselves to the Lord. With that in mind, we see two primary purposes for dedication:

1. For parents, joined by their church community, to celebrate the birth or adoption of a child, joyfully thanking God for this new addition to the family and to the church community.
2. For parents to commit themselves publicly to raise their child in the nurture and love of the Lord, and for the church to pray for them in their awesome responsibility as parents.

## Who should have their child dedicated?

If we agree that dedication is primarily parents publicly dedicating themselves to raise their children in the nurture and love of the Lord, we'll agree that these three things should be true of the parents:

1. They should be committed Christians themselves. They should have reached a point of believing the Good News – that God invites them to be part of God's kingdom, family and mission in this world. They have confidence that Jesus lived and died to pay for their sins and rose from death to give them a new life, that God loves them, and that they can have a growing relationship with God as a free gift of grace. They shouldn't just be Christian in name – but rather, Christians from the heart, with a sincere personal, committed faith. (If you aren't sure how to become a committed Christian, please speak with one of our Elders— any of us would be glad to help you take this important step.)
2. They should be involved in the church – either as committed actively attending members or as people preparing for membership.
3. They should take seriously their responsibility to raise their children with a strong spiritual and biblical foundation. They should be committed to having their children in church, and even more importantly, to making God a part of their daily lives. There are two beautiful passages that describe this type of parenting, one from the Old Testament, and one from the New Testament:

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commands that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up...*

*In the future, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees, and laws the Lord our God has commanded you?" tell him: "...The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the Lord our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. And if we are careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness." (Deuteronomy 6:4-25)*

*Parents do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)*

## What does a child dedication involve?

At our church, we generally have child dedications as a part of our regular services. You will be asked to meet the pastor for a time of study and review of the scriptures as part of your preparation to make six vows in the service. You will be asked to join our Elders up front during a service. The pastor will introduce you and your child. After that, you will be asked to answer "We do" or "I do" after each vow is read to you. The dedication will conclude with a time of prayer.

## Scheduling and Confirmation

Upon approval, you will be contacted and offered several dates to select from for your dedication service. We recommend that you not make travel plans for friends and relatives until your service has been confirmed.

## Child Dedication Vows

1. Will you do your best to raise this child to honor, revere, and love Jesus Christ?
2. Will you do your best to maintain a home where Jesus Christ is honored and obeyed, where the Word of God is the authority and Jesus Christ is the head?
3. Will you commit this child to God in prayer on a regular basis, trusting God to override your mistakes and make up for your shortcomings?
4. Will you actively rely on the Holy Spirit to raise this child and to incline his or her heart to the Lord?
5. Will you do your best to release this child to the will of God, whatever that might be, without bitterness or resistance?
6. Will you do your best to be fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ, so that this child has godly examples to follow?

These vows are based on the principle of Hannah's dedication of Samuel: *"I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord."* 1 Samuel 1:27-28

*"And the Lord was gracious to Hannah. She conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord."*  
1 Samuel 2:21