

Answers to some key questions about Christian Baby Dedication

What is a Baby Dedication?

A baby dedication is a ceremony that expresses your desire as parents to raise your child in the ways of the Bible and to ask God to use your child for His purposes. You submit your will for your child to His will. The act of dedication must not be thought of as a ritual or ceremony that has saving merit to it. The child can never be automatically a Christian as a result of being dedicated. The Bible says that a baby is a blessing from God. When you decide to dedicate your child, you are acknowledging the awesome responsibility God has given you in raising your child.

Why should I dedicate my child?

The Bible provides an example for us in that Mary and Joseph took baby Jesus to the temple to be dedicated to God. As followers of Christ, we should want to also make the public declaration to our family, and our church. It is invaluable to be able to tell your children as they are growing up that they belong to Jesus and that you have asked God to use them in a formal declaration.

Where in the Scripture does it say to dedicate your child? Scripture does not mention anything about dedication of children; however, Hannah dedicated her son Samuel to the Lord (1 Samuel 1:27,28). Jesus was dedicated to the Lord as a baby (Luke 2:22) and baptized as an adult (Matthew 3:13-17). In Mark 10:13-16 we read: "People were bringing little children to Jesus to have Him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, He was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth; anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it'. And He took the children in His arms, put His hand on them and blessed them." It is primarily from this passage of Scripture that we model our service of dedication and present a child to the Lord.

How old should the child be?

While there is no set age for a child to be presented to the Lord, children are generally presented within the first year or two of their life. We do encourage parents who have not dedicated their child to God to do so if the child is still in grade five or below.

Why do you not baptize infants?

According to the Bible, everyone (adult or child) who recognizes his or her need of a Savior and then repents and believes in Christ should be baptized (Acts 2:38,41; 8:36-38). However, in the Scripture there is no record of infants or very young children being baptized. This is because they are unaware of right and wrong and have nothing of which to repent. They are not yet able to understand the need for a Savior.

What about godparents?

There is nothing mentioned in the Bible about godparents. Parents themselves have the responsibility to raise up their children in the things of the Lord; they cannot shirk this responsibility to someone else. Some parents may like to call witnesses to confirm their commitment, "At the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be established"

(2 Corinthians 13:1). These may be relatives or loved ones who know the parents well and who are themselves Christians and faithful to the Lord. While many families participate in the dedication ceremony, there is not sufficient space to accommodate everyone around the altar area. Only the parents of the child or children will be asked to come forward.

Some families within our church do choose godparents for their children to be spiritual mentors as the son or daughter grows to adulthood. These godparents also serve as the line of custody in the case of the death of both parents.

What is expected of me after I dedicate my child?

Dedication is not just a pledge within the church, it is also a promise to cultivate a spiritual atmosphere in the home. One must never underestimate the incredible influence a parent has on the faith of their children. Infant dedication expresses the intention and faith of the parents to do everything they can to lead their child to salvation.

It is a public pledge to circle the child with a positive environment that will nurture the child's faith in God. Scripture tells us that we are to "train a child in the way he should go..." (Proverbs 22:6). Dedication of children to God is a promise to model a Christian lifestyle to the children worshipping with a church family regularly. In a sense, a Christian Dedication of a child is a dedication of the parents to be godly role models.

Do I need to meet any requirements?

It is incredible how many parents who go through the process of a baby dedication who have not even dedicated themselves to the Lord, much less their children. Therefore, we would hope that those parents who want to publicly dedicate their child to the Lord meet the following criteria:

Profess Jesus as Savior: We believe it is important that those parents who want to publicly testify that they will dedicate their child must first have placed their faith in Jesus. If you don't believe in Christ, how can you expect your child to?

Life surrendered to God: Dedication is all about surrender. It is the parent saying before God, "Lord, I surrender this child to You so that You may accomplish Your purpose in their life. I give this child back to you." Develop a life of daily devotion to Him by reading the Bible, prayer, church attendance and engage in community with other Christians.

If you have further questions please contact Sarah at the church office, Monday-Thursday, at 404-876-5535 x313