

Child Dedication



**Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD,
The fruit of the womb is a reward.**

Psalm 127:3

BIBLICAL BASIS

The precedent for dedicating children to the Lord is found in two key passages of Scripture, one in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament.

One of the clearest examples took place when a godly woman named Hannah prayed for years that God would grant her a child. When God answered, she gave birth to her son Samuel. Hannah dedicated him to the Lord in 1 Samuel 1:27-28 (NASB): "For this boy I prayed, and the Lord has given me my petition which I asked of Him. So I have also dedicated him to the Lord; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the Lord."

In Luke 2:22, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple in an act of dedication: "Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord."

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How is a child dedication ceremony different from baptism?

The Bible teaches that belief in Jesus Christ for salvation always precedes baptism (Acts 2:41, 8:12, 10:47-48). When Christ blessed the little children, He invited them to come to Him, not to a baptismal service - in fact, there's no mention of water anywhere in this passage. There is no doubt Jesus welcomes children. In fact, He honors and loves children much more than we do, but there is a big difference between blessing and baptizing.

At Edgewood, we do not practice infant baptism, but instead, follow the clear teaching of Scripture that baptism by immersion is only for born again believers (see the document, "Taking the Plunge," for more information).

2. How do parents prepare for child dedication? First of all, parents must make sure they are saved. Deuteronomy 6 teaches that parents must first love God before they can be a godly example to their children. Next, recognize the duty of teaching children belongs primarily to parents. Set up some practices in your family that will create a spiritual environment conducive to faith formation in your children.

A Biblical Charge to Parents

Dedication of our children is very important, but we must also be devoted to consistently and intentionally impacting them for God's glory and kingdom expansion. God grants parents the privilege and responsibility of teaching and training their children.

In Deuteronomy 6:4-7, parents are exhorted to love God, to be an example in the home, and to teach God's ways to their children: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

In Mark 10:14-16, Jesus rebuked the disciples by telling them to welcome the little children: "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom

If your spouse is not yet saved, a pastor would be happy to discuss this situation with you.

3. Do I need to be a member of Edgewood to publicly dedicate my children? While you do not need to be a member to have your child dedicated, we do ask that you have made the decision to call Edgewood your home. In dedicating your child to the Lord, you are committing to willingly partner with God and the church to raise your child in God's ways by plugging into the life and ministry of Edgewood.

The church is God's ordained organization intended to aid in spiritual formation (Ephesians 4:11-16). As a general rule of thumb, we would like to see you attend EBC for at least six months before dedicating your child to the Lord in a public service.

4. If I'm a single parent, can I have my child dedicated? Absolutely! This is a way for you to commit publicly to do all you can to raise your child without the presence of a spouse. We do, however, encourage you to discuss child dedication with the other parent. We are committed to do

of God as a little child will by no means enter it.' And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them."

In Ephesians 6:1-4, parents are reminded of their duty to bring children up to honor and obey them: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.' And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

While a dedication ceremony focuses on the child, it is really the parents who are making a public commitment and declaration to raise their son or daughter in a way that will be conducive to their child's conversion and discipleship. The Bible exhorts parents to be the spiritual champions in the home.

Grandparents also play a key role in the faith formation of the next generation as seen in Psalm 71:18 - "Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come."

all we can to support single parents in helping to provide a Christian foundation for your child. One of our pastors would be happy to discuss this in greater detail with you as each situation is unique.

- 5. If I am not married but living with someone in a sexual relationship, can I dedicate my child?** We ask parents who are living together but not married to surrender to God's plan for marriage first. Again, it's important for parents to obey God in order to set a godly example for their children.
- 6. If I want to schedule a child dedication ceremony, what should I do?** Make a note on your Connection Card, talk with a pastor, call the church office at (309) 786-7913 or send an email to info@edgewoodbaptist.net.

As you consider dedicating your child to the Lord, may the Lord grant you the promise of Psalm 22: 30-31 (NLT): "**Our children will also serve him. Future generations will hear about the wonders of the Lord. His righteous acts will be told to those not yet born. They will hear about everything He has done.**"

*At Edgewood, we believe
children are a gift from God.*

PSALM 127:3

As a church family, we are committed to partner with parents in the evangelizing and discipling of sons and daughters to be difference-makers for Christ.

One of the ways we demonstrate this commitment is by giving parents an opportunity to publicly dedicate their child to Christ. We're excited for you as you investigate what a child dedication ceremony is all about.

A TYPICAL CEREMONY

After calling the parents and child to the front, the pastor will ask the parents questions similar to these:

- Have you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ for your salvation and are you fully surrendered to God?
- Are you committed to create an intentional environment in your home in which your child can come to faith in Christ and then grow as a Christ-follower?
- Are you committed as a family to participate in the life and ministry of Edgewood, giving priority to regular attendance and involvement, so we can partner with you in the great adventure of parenting?
- Are you ready to give your child back to the Lord in an act of dedication?

The pastor will then offer a prayer of dedication and conclude with a charge to the congregation to partner with the parents in equipping the child to reach his/her full potential in Christ.



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