



Parent Tools: Dedication Info

2.26.18

Overview

Baby Dedication at Lifesong Church is a moment when parents publicly commit themselves to abiding by biblical principles and raising their children according to God's standards. Not only are you dedicating your child to God, but you are also dedicating yourselves as parents to God in partnership with your church community. You are committing yourselves to maintaining a Christian home in which Christ is honored and the Word of God is held in reverence. This begins the partnership between your Family and the Life team at Lifesong Church. This partnership is designed to help you disciple better at home from now until your children become fully surrendered adults!

Set Apart. Christian parents are to do all they can to “set apart” their child to God until that child can make his or her own choice regarding a relationship with Jesus Christ.

The responsibilities God has entrusted to Christian parents include:

- **Petition.** Continuously praying for their children (Job 1:5).
- **Direction.** Instructing them in the way of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6).
- **Demonstration.** Setting a Godly example (Proverbs 20:7).
- **Guidance.** Disciplining them as the Lord would discipline us (Proverbs 29:15,17; 13:24).

These responsibilities can only be fulfilled in Christ's strength (Philippians 4:13).

Committed. Fully surrendered to Jesus and devoted to our family and His church.

- **Married or Single.** Only a couple committed to Christ and married, as biblically defined between one biological man and one biological woman, or a Single Parent committed to Christ and not living with someone out of wedlock may participate in Baby Dedication. Single parents who dedicate their children may not have boyfriends or girlfriends present with them on the platform.
- **We don't believe, yet.** Parents who have not placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord will be unable to submit their children to God's will and His ways, because they themselves do not know the ways of the Lord. As a result, we must decline any requests to involve an unbelieving parent in the dedication of a child. As a parent, your devotion to God—or lack of it—will make a resounding impression on your child.
- **I believe, but my spouse does not.** A believing parent may dedicate a child independently of an unbelieving spouse so long as they have consent.
- **Unmarried.** We believe that unmarried parents living together do not set a the example of God's best. Therefore, unmarried parents will be advised to separate (if living together out of wedlock) and/or wait until they are married to dedicate their child.

F.A.Q. Frequently Asked Questions

- **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 also should want to 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 requiring 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 10:11-13 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.
- **Can I as a grandparent dedicate my grandchild?**
 - Yes, if you have full custody and the child lives with you. The person making a public vow should be the child’s legal guardian who is responsible for the upbringing of the child.
- **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. Some parents may like to call witnesses to confirm their commitment.
 - These may be relatives or loved ones who know the parents well and who themselves are Christians and faithful to the Lord. While godparents are welcome to attend the ceremony, they will not stand with the parents.
- **What if I am a believer but my spouse is not?**
 - As mentioned above - If only one parent is a believer, the dedication of the child can be done if the unbelieving parent has given permission.
- **What if I am not married but I live with the child’s father/mother?**
 - Dedication does nothing for the child; it is actually a declaration (vow) where the parents dedicate themselves to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is very difficult to make such a declaration when living in opposition to the Word of God. We are very supportive of parents and do encourage them to make their union legal first and then proceed with the Baby Dedication.

- **What happens during the actual ceremony?**
 - During the ceremony, the Pastor will ask the parents to bring their children to the platform. You will vow before God and the congregation, much like wedding vows, that you will raise your child in the Christian faith, that you will be his or her example, and that you will train your child in Christian disciplines: Prayer, Bible reading, regular church participation, etc.
- **Should the child be dressed a special way?**
 - No. You can dress the child in whatever clothes you wish.
- **Can we take pictures during the ceremony?**
 - Ofcourse! However please keep in mind picture taking is permissible if done orderly and without interference. The vows being made at this time are important and serious to the Lord. Please make sure that your guests are aware that they should use great discretion when taking pictures during the ceremony.
- **What is expected of me after I dedicate my child?**
 - Dedication is a pledge 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). This includes meeting together regularly as Christians to spur one another onto love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:23-24). Dedication of children to God is a promise to model a Christian lifestyle to the children while 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. 2 Timothy 1:5 states, "When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also."
- **Why do I need to meet these requirements and guidelines?**
 - It is sad to see parents who go through the experience of a child dedication who have not even dedicated themselves to the Lord, much less their children. This makes a mockery of the whole event and it loses its significance. Therefore, we would expect that those parents who want to publicly dedicate their child to the Lord meet the requirements and guidelines stated above and below.

Next Steps Now what?

- **I feel like my family meets the guidelines.** Please visit our church website: lifesongonline.org/Dedication to walk through the remaining steps in the process.
- **I'm not sure my family meets the guidelines.** We would love to have the opportunity to help assist your family through the use of God's Word and in God's love, so you can position yourself and family for God's best. We love you and believe that becoming like Jesus doesn't happen overnight. God created us to be connected to a local church to help us grow in understanding and fulfill His plan for our lives. Please reach out to the Family Life staff at your campus for clarity about your next steps or if you desire to make an appointment for counseling regarding any questions.