

You and Your Child's Dedication

*"Sons are a heritage from the Lord,
children a reward from Him."
Psalm 127:3*

We, as Christians, have a tremendous responsibility given to us when the Lord blesses us with a child. By doing so, He entrusts us with the responsibility of raising that child in the way of the Lord and establishing early in their life, a foundation built upon Jesus Christ. It is this tremendous responsibility that causes us to think of baby dedications as "family dedications." We feel that the whole family needs to be lifted up to the Lord so that each member will be able to keep his or her responsibilities.

But first, what exactly is involved in "dedicating" a child to the Lord is given to us in 1 Samuel 1:11, 26-28. Hannah, being barren (or without child) for many years, was weeping before the Lord because of her barrenness. As she was weeping, she made a vow to God. "And she made a vow, saying, 'O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, THEN I WILL GIVE HIM TO THE LORD ALL THE DAYS OF HIS LIFE . . .'"

God honored Hannah's request and gave her a son named Samuel. Hannah then, in keeping her vow, dedicated (or set apart) Samuel unto the Lord.

We see here a beautiful example of what our attitudes should be towards our children and their relationship to God. We are to do the most we can to "set apart" our children to God until the day that they can make their own choice. By dedicating your children to the Lord, you are making a vow to raise them in His ways. The following is a list (though not exhaustive) of some of the things parents do as part of keeping their vows.

The dedication of your family is a serious matter. We hope this information has helped you recognize the extent of this commitment that you will be making.

1. KNOW GOD'S GIFT OF LOVE

The greatest importance is to know the gift of God's love in Jesus Christ personally as parents. In Ephesians 2:6-9 the Bible says "And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast."

2. BE A LIVING EXAMPLE OF CHRIST TO YOUR CHILDREN

It does not do your child any good to instruct him in the way of the Lord if you, yourself, do not walk what you talk. Therefore, it is good for you to always be examining yourself and your witness to your children. In Proverbs 20:7 the Bible says "the righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed (happy) are his children after him." The main reason for the blessed state of this man's children is that they have someone to look up to and use as an example to model their own behavior. We, as parents, are encouraged to strive to be that example to our children even as Christ is our example.

3. INSTRUCT YOUR CHILD IN THE WAY OF THE LORD

We are taught in Ephesians 6:4 (NIV) to "bring them (your children) up in training and instruction of the Lord." And Proverbs 22:6 adds, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." If we, while our children are young, instruct them in His ways, our children will grow in the ways of God for a lifetime.

4. PRAY CONSTANTLY FOR YOUR CHILD

A parent's responsibility to pray for their child does not end at their dedication, but continues throughout the rest of their life.

James 5:16 says, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." The prayer of Christ-centered parents powerfully covers their children in prayer that will produce effective change for a lifetime.

Note About Baptism

We do not christen or baptize babies at our church. We believe that baptism is a decision they need to make for themselves when they are older and after they have made the decision to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. What we do here is baby dedications. This is a time for parents who have made this their church home to stand in front of the congregation making a public declaration committing their child to the Lord and to raise them in a Christ centered home.