

YOU AND YOUR BABY'S DEDICATION

*"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is His reward."
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 up that child in the way of the Lord and establishing early in his 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 unit 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" your child to the Lord? As mentioned, children are a heritage from the Lord. He gives them to us to bless us, and because of this, we must be willing to give them back to Him. We too must be willing to totally submit our children to the will of our Father.

A perfect example of "dedicating" a child to the Lord is given to us in I Samuel 1:11, 26-28. Hannah, being barren (without child) for many years, was weeping before the Lord because of her condition. As she was weeping she made a vow to God. "And she vowed a vow, and said, 'O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thy handmaid a man child, THEN I WILL GIVE HIM UNTO THE LORD ALL THE DAYS OF HIS LIFE...'" (I Samuel 1:11).

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 toward 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 (something all of us must do at one time or another). By dedicating your children to the Lord, you are making a vow to raise them in His ways and not your own. You are committing yourselves to this promise and must do all possible to keep it. The following is a list (though not exhaustive) of some of the things you as parents should do as part of keeping your vow.

1. Pray constantly for your child.

A parent's responsibility to pray for their child does not end at their dedication but continues until the day the child commits their own life to the Lord. Job gives us an example of this in Job 1:5. "Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all, for Job said: It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. This did Job continually."

2. Instruct your child in the way of the Lord.

We are taught in Ephesians 6:4 (NIV) to "bring them (your children) up in the training and instruction of the Lord." And Proverbs 22:6 adds, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." If we, while our children are young, instruct them in His ways, it is these sure ways that will develop into a life-long commitment.

3. 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, you must 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 some one to look up to and use as an example to model their own behavior. We as parents must strive to be that example to our children even as Christ is our example.

4. Discipline your children in the same way the Lord disciplines us.
The Book of Proverbs teaches us many practical aspects concerning the discipline we are to provide for our children. Some of the Scriptures that relate to this subject are as follows:

"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother shame. Correct thy son and he shall give thee rest, yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul." Proverbs 29:15,17.

"He that spareth the rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him early." Proverbs 13:24.

Other references: Proverbs 19:18; 22:15.

As you can see, by chastening or disciplining your child you are showing your love for them. This brings us to the motivation for discipline. Any discipline you give to your child should be done for their profit and not as a release for your own anger and/or frustration. Remember, you are to discipline your child in the same way that the Lord disciplines you. God never strikes at His children in anger, and you shouldn't either. Colossians 3:21 reads, "Fathers, do not provoke or irritate or fret your children -- do not be hard or harass them; lest they become discouraged and sullen and morose and feel inferior and frustrated; DO NOT BREAK THEIR SPIRIT."

We as parents are not in the business of breaking our children's spirits, but instead we are to encourage their spiritual growth. Explain to them why you must discipline them, carry out that discipline, and then most importantly, LOVE THEM. If you are able to do this, then you will be disciplining your children in the way the Lord would have you to.

As mentioned previously, these are but a few of the responsibilities that God calls us to as parents. It needs to be said that if you yourself are not a born-again Christian, these responsibilities will be impossible to keep. This is why we here at Calvary Chapel decline any requests to dedicate children if the parents do not know Christ as their personal Savior and are not in attendance here on a regular basis. We will dedicate your child and the parent who does in fact have a relationship with Jesus Christ, but it would be an act of hypocrisy for us to allow a parent who does not know Jesus Christ to make a vow to Him that he cannot possibly keep. We read in Proverbs 20:25, "It is a snare to a man to utter a vow (or consecration) rashly, and not until afterward inquire (whether he can fulfill it)." Other Scriptures relating to this point are in Numbers 30:2, Deuteronomy 23:21-23, Ecclesiastes 5:4.

There are instances recorded for us in the Bible where individuals have made vows before the Lord and then not kept them. As a result of breaking their vows, these people were dealt with severely by God. We cannot allow people to make a vow unto the Lord if they do not have the understanding of the responsibilities that go along with making that vow. We view this as an act of protection, and not as one of rejection.

Hopefully, you can now understand our viewpoint as being totally Biblical. The dedication of your family to God is something too serious to be entered into lightly. It is hoped that this paper has helped you to recognize the extent of this commitment that you will be making. If you have any questions concerning anything that has been said or not covered here, please write them down and inquire of the pastor when you return this form to the office.

Prior to setting a date for dedication, you will need to bring your completed information sheet into the office. On the day of the dedication, please check in at the church office fifteen minutes before the service.

Also, any children under the age of 10 years old are not to remain in the sanctuary after the dedication. This is absolute and without exception, so please make arrangements with the Nursery or Sunday School class before the service begins. Parents, please notify your relatives with young children about this policy!

Koinonia Fellowship
500 Main Street, East Rochester, New York 14445
585-385-0450

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\*\*\*For Office Use Only\*\*\*  
PASTOR REQUESTED \_\_\_\_\_  
TODAY'S DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF DEDICATION \_\_\_\_\_  
TIME OF DEDICATION \_\_\_\_\_  
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*******Baby Dedication*******

SEATS NEEDED _____

It is our desire at Koinonia Fellowship for the parents of each child being dedicated to the Lord to have a Biblical understanding of what "Baby Dedication" signifies. With this as our goal, we would like you to help us by answering a few brief questions that will be used to assist in preparing you and your child for dedication.

Thank You,

Parents' Name (s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (s) _____

Child's Name _____ ****GENDER** _____

Birthdate _____ Birthplace _____

If further space is needed to answer the following questions, please use the back of this sheet.

1. Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior? _____

If so, how long ago? _____

2. How long have you been attending Koinonia Fellowship? _____

3. What does having your baby dedicated mean to you? _____

"We do not do dedications on the first Sunday of the month or at the 10:00 am service"
Parents, please notify your guests (with children) of our "Children in the Sanctuary Policy"