



Parent + Child
DEDICATION

“I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD.” And he worshiped the LORD there.”

1 Samuel 1:27-28

PARENTS,

At Bethel we realize parenting can be one of the most rewarding and adventurous times in life as well as one of the most overwhelming times.

With all the changes and busyness going on in your home, we invite you to take some time to focus on what matters most. We believe that as parents, you will have the greatest impact on your child and what happens at home is so important. It is our desire to partner with you as we encourage and equip you to be godly parents through this journey as you seek to raise your child to one day know, love and serve Jesus Christ.

Parent/Child dedication is a commitment to raise your child in a Gospel—centered home, while taking the lead role in your child's discipleship. This dedication is not a statement of salvation for your child, but rather a statement of how you will raise your child. While not a command of Scripture, baby/child dedication can be a beautiful symbol. It should be done with a community of believers who know you personally and can commit to walking with you in this commitment. This is why we, at Bethel, participate with you. You are responsible to raise your child(ren) in a Gospel—centered home taking an active role in your child's discipleship. We as your church family, are making a similar commitment to you to come along side of you and help you in this discipleship journey.

The responsibilities the Lord has entrusted to parents include continuously praying for their children (Deuteronomy 6:4-9), instructing them in the way of the Lord, setting a godly example, and disciplining them as the Lord would discipline us (Proverbs 29:15, 17; 13:24). As parents, you are only able to do these things through Christ's strength (Philippians 4:13).

The word "dedication" means "to consecrate". It is the act of setting apart people or things to serve God. In the Old Testament, we see how Hannah prayed for a child and promised God that the child, Samuel, would be given to the Lord all the days of his life (1 Samuel 1:11, 28). In the New Testament, we see how Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple to "present" Him to the Lord (Luke 2:22).

These parents took this act very seriously and were making a commitment by presenting their children to the Lord. Bringing a child before the Lord is not a secret formula for keeping them from ever experiencing harm or pain. Rather, it is a commitment that parents make to do their part in raising their child before the Lord.

Just as Moses called for wholehearted commitment, we as a church are calling you the parent(s) to a wholehearted commitment to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

Through the child dedication:

Parents are acknowledging their child as a gift from God. **Psalm 127:3-5**

Parents are publicly declaring their intention to be the chief discipler in their child's life. They will be diligent in passing their faith onto their child(ren) and raise them in such a way that they are given an opportunity to know God and to establish a personal relationship with Christ. **Deuteronomy 6:49, Ephesians 6:4**

Parents are affirming their total dependence upon the Lord. **John 15:5**

Parents are asking family, friends and the church community to prayerfully support and hold them accountable to these commitments.

FAQs...

WHAT CHILD DEDICATION IS NOT...

This isn't the day of salvation for your child! Salvation is the free gift of God, received when someone grasps his or her need for Christ and makes the conscious decision to enter into a relationship with God.

IS CHILD DEDICATION LIKE INFANT BAPTISM?

Child dedication is also not baptism. Baptism is for believers—those who have already by faith trusted in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins—to publicly identify themselves with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ through the symbolic act of being immersed in water. Once a child is old enough to make a decision to accept Christ as his or her personal Savior, then he or she can make a choice to be baptized.

WHAT KIND OF COMMITMENT AM I MAKING?

As parents, you begin by publicly acknowledging your personal relationship with Jesus Christ. As you present your child to God, you are recognizing that he or she belongs to God and has been born to experience His love and to serve Him.

You are committing, as Christian parents, to teach the truths of God's Word in your home and participate in regular worship and discipleship with your children. You are also committing to be a Christ-like example and seek to lead your children to a personal faith in Christ as soon as they are ready.

MAY MY CHILD WEAR A CHRISTENING GOWN?

Your child may wear whatever you prefer.

WHO SHOULD WE INVITE TO THE DEDICATION SERVICE?

There is no limit to the number of guests you may invite! We encourage families to invite extended family members, friends and neighbors to attend this special time for your child.

DO WE NEED TO SELECT "GODPARENTS" FOR OUR CHILD?

We do not use the term "Godparents" at Bethel Church, however we certainly support your choice of significant individuals to offer support, encouragement and to hold you accountable to the commitment you are making.

I AM A SINGLE PARENT. MAY I STILL DEDICATE MY CHILD?

Absolutely!

DO I HAVE TO BE A MEMBER OF BETHEL CHURCH TO PARTICIPATE IN CHILD DEDICATION?

No, participants need not be church members. We only ask that you be regular attendees with a sincere desire to raise your child in a godly, Christ-centered home.

BEING A NEW CHRISTIAN, I AM NERVOUS ABOUT ALL OF THIS.

We are delighted to be a part of this important step in your newly found walk with Jesus. Our intent is to come alongside you and to help ensure that Child Dedication is a non-threatening process with deep significance for you and your family.

I AM A CHRIST FOLLOWER, BUT MY SPOUSE IS NOT. CAN WE PARTICIPATE IN CHILD DEDICATION?

The dedication is actually an adult affirmation that you both know Christ personally and desire that same faith for your child. We would not encourage you to publically declare that, if it is not true of you. Contact our Children's Director if you want to process your situation further and explore alternatives.

MY PARTNER AND I ARE LIVING TOGETHER BUT ARE NOT MARRIED. CAN WE PUBLICALLY DEDICATE OUR CHILD AT BETHEL?

Dedication is actually a public statement that you, as parents, know Christ as your Savior and want your home to honor Him. We believe the Bible teaches that couples should not live together unless they have made the commitment of marriage first. Because of this biblical principle, we would not be able to have you participate in the public dedication service. Our Children's Director is willing to talk with you and help you process your situation in light of this biblical teaching. Please contact the church to arrange a visit.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO HAVE MY CHILD DEDICATED?

First, you will need to register your child for the dedication on our website bethelfc.com/kids>Parent/Child Dedication. The Sunday before Dedication Sunday we will hold a Parent/Child Dedication class. It's a great way to get to know our staff, learn about dedication, and prepare for the ceremony. We do require first time dedications to attend this class before participating in a dedication ceremony.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE BABY/CHILD DEDICATION?

Child dedications generally occurs at the beginning of our services, after the first two songs. Name tags will be provided for you at the meeting place in the church office. We ask that you arrive 45 minutes before the service starts. We will have an elder available to meet with and pray over your family.

We then ask that you find a seat in one of the first few rows on the right side of the Worship Center. When Allison comes forward to make her way up to the stage, this is your cue to begin making your way on the stage with your child(ren).

Allison will briefly explain what Child Dedication is and then introduce all the parents/families who are on stage to have their child(ren) dedicated. She will then ask you to publicly commit to several statements (See below). At that time, you are to respond accordingly. She will then pray for you, your child(ren) and the Bethel Family as we partner together to diligently disciple your child together.

COVENANT OF PARENTS

- **Do you pledge as parents that you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?**
- **Do you recognize that your child is a gift from God and both thank God and glorify God for the gift of your child?**
- **Do you pledge as parents that, with God's help, you will bring up your children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, making every reasonable effort, with patience and love, to build the Word of God, the character of Christ and the joy of the Lord into their lives?**

COVENANT OF CONGREGATION

- **Will you offer your ongoing love, support, prayers and encouragement to each of these parents?**
- **Will you also be faithful in praying for each child, and, as much as you are able, help teach and set a godly example for them so that they might one day come to trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior?**

After the prayer we present each family with a gift - The Jesus Storybook Bible. We have found this Bible to be extremely helpful in connecting the Gospel to kids' lives. We encourage you to make a commitment to read this Bible to your kids until they outgrow it.

