



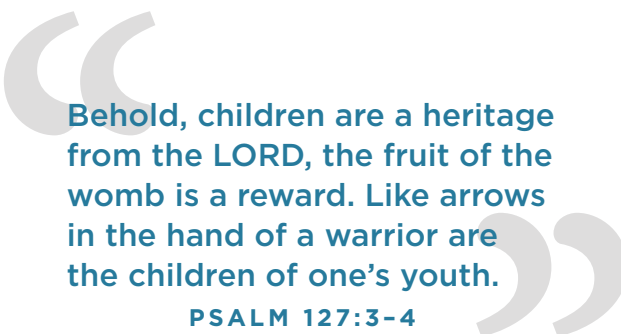
Parent Child

DEDICATION

 Prestonwood

Parent Child DEDICATION

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**Behold, children are a heritage
from the LORD, the fruit of the
womb is a reward. Like arrows
in the hand of a warrior are
the children of one's youth.**

PSALM 127:3-4

You are holding a baby! What joy, excitement, anticipation! What responsibility and challenge! So many thoughts and feelings surface as you stand at the trailhead of the path marked parenting. Yet, for all the adventures you have ahead, there is also an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the gift you hold in your arms. You want to give your best and be your best for this baby. You want to “do it right.” And for all these reasons and many more, you are considering taking part in a baby dedication.

A baby dedication is made of several important ingredients. First is the recognition that the child you hold is not yours, but God's. God is the author of life. Your baby is not an accident, mistake or even the outcome of your choice. The baby you hold today is a miracle of God's creative power. This life, with all of its uniqueness and potential, is a gift God has given you.

No person has your child's exact personality, gifts or fingerprints. As Dr. Mamie McCullough,

noted educated and motivational speaker, has said, “Hold up a thumb and remember you’re thumb-body!” What a marvelous thought! No wonder the psalmist declared,

For you formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. —Psalm 139:13–14

We live in a day when human life is the subject of political debate and social choice. Human life is devalued and, at will, discarded. But our church stands on the foundation of God’s Word, giving voice to the unborn and valuing every human life. For this reason, we rejoice in you and your baby. Every child is part of God’s plan and purpose.

An Opportunity to Celebrate!

In 1 Samuel 1, a woman named Hannah yearned for a child. Her greatest desire was to be a mother. Yet, she experienced disappointment after disappointment, and remained childless. She continually cried out to God and, in time, God gave her the gift of a son. When Samuel was born, Hannah said, “For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore I also have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD.” Understanding that the child born to Hannah and her husband, Elkanah, was a gift from God, Hannah stood before God and offered praise and thanks for His gift in their lives.

A baby dedication is also a celebration of the gift you have received from God. The church is the best place to celebrate the arrival of babies because it is a gathering place for worship. We want to join you in gratitude and joy as we celebrate God's gift placed in your arms. We want to embrace you and the challenge that lies ahead, praying for you and encouraging you as you look forward to all God will do through the life of your child.

Yes, a baby dedication is a celebration of God's gift, but there is more...

A Commitment to God's Plan

A baby dedication is not just about the baby. It is about the entire family. Standing in a church and celebrating the gift of your child is the first step, but following Christ and seeking His wisdom in the rearing of your child is the journey. A baby dedication is, in reality, a parent/child dedication.

This service is as much for the parent as the child. Following the statement of Hannah's grateful expression of praise to God, the Bible says Hannah and Elkanah worshipped the Lord in the temple. They gave public witness to their commitment to honor God's plan for their child and serve as partners in the task of honoring God in their home.

God has given you a gift! But this gift is also a responsibility and a challenge, encouraging your dependence upon Him day by day. A child can bring you to your knees like nothing else in life.

You may be thinking, “I do not know if I understand what God expects of me or if I can do all He would require.” In His wisdom and love, God provides a path. In Deuteronomy 6:4–9, you are given your “job description” as a parent.

- You are to love God and pursue your relationship with Him on a daily basis.
- You are to honor God by obeying His Word in your life.
- You are to teach your child to love and reverence God.
- You are to provide spiritual and moral training for your child according to God’s Holy Word.

In this service, you are acknowledging your need for God’s wisdom, guidance and strength in parenting. You are affirming the commitment of your heart to follow Christ and obey His Word. You are surrendering yourself to honor God by being a faithful steward of the gift He has entrusted to you. This is a moment when you recognize and embrace the spiritual responsibility of answering to God for the child you hold in your arms.

Let's get back to the questions: What does God expect? What does God require? He desires simply that you develop a relationship with Him so your child can see, understand, and embrace a relationship with Him. It involves all of life and encompasses the daily journey of parenting. The role of mom or dad is intended to be a partnership with God in nurturing and shaping the life of your child.

Being a parent is a challenge. Some parents have said, "We spend the first two years teaching our children to walk and talk, and the next 18 years to sit down and be quiet!" However, parenting is rewarding both in this life and in the life to come. For more information on this subject, review the section, *How Can I Be a Godly Parent?*

The final ingredient in a baby dedication is:

A Time for Your Church to Embrace and Support You

God has not left you without instructions for parenting, and He has not left you to do this task alone. When our church comes together for a baby dedication, we are not simply celebrating the gift of a child and the commitment of a parent. We are embracing our responsibility to support families by teaching God's Word, serving one another in love, training up disciples of Jesus, and pointing others to Christ. We understand the importance of maintaining an atmosphere that

inspires faith, challenges growth, and provides opportunities for service.

Believing we have been charged with sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the next generation, we enthusiastically affirm you and your child, praying for God to work through us together to make an eternal difference in the life of your child.

Our commitment to children's and student ministries provides opportunities for spiritual and emotional growth. Through biblical preaching, adult Bible Fellowship groups and a variety of family-focused events, we are also creating an atmosphere of spiritual growth in your life as a parent. We want to encourage you in your journey with your child, and have given much attention to developing ministries for this purpose.

While no church is perfect in all it provides for parents and children, the commitment of our community is to do all we can for Christ today and for the generations to come.

How Can I Be a Godly Parent?

PRESENT your child to God as Hannah and Elkanah did, asking Him to give you wisdom, grace, and faith to see your child's value through His eyes and not just your own. This is not something you do just on baby dedication day, but every day as you behold the wonder of your child's growth and development.

ACKNOWLEDGE your inadequacy to be what God requires apart from a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. The first step to becoming the parent your child needs is to acknowledge your need for a relationship with God and to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord.

Today, we read and hear about dysfunctional families. Maybe you have struggled to overcome family failure and injury in your own life. The truth of the matter is we are all dysfunctional because of a universal problem called sin. The Bible is clear about this: "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

You may think you have to be a spiritual giant to be a parent. This is far from true! In fact, in order to be the best parent you can be, you must first acknowledge that you are a sinner who needs a Savior. Once you have experienced forgiveness and received the gift of new life in Christ, you have a new capacity to lead, love, and live. A church ceremony cannot provide spiritual

blessings for your child. No one has a mystical or magical power to wave over your child at birth. But your life can become a source of spiritual blessing once you receive Christ and live for His purpose, allowing Him to shape your family and your future.

RESOLVE to pursue a daily walk with Christ. Spiritual activities and disciplines—such as prayer, singing, thanksgiving and Bible reading—can all play a part in your daily “routine” as you invest in the life of your child. Developing an atmosphere of love, security and growth all flow from your personal relationship with God. Call upon the Lord daily and prove His strength in your life.

ELEVATE God’s Word in your life and home. The Bible is filled with specific instruction and guidance for parents. It challenges us to love and honor each other, to affirm and value our children, and to discipline and train them in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Scripture presents principles and values for your safety and the welfare of your child.

A dedication can be a time of renewed obedience to God. As you prepare for this service, examine your life. Ask the Lord to reveal areas of needed adjustment. Then, commit to walk in obedience to His Word day by day. You see, you are the greatest spiritual influence in your child’s life. Your child needs to see and understand your submission to God’s Word. For this reason, the Bible declares,

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...” (Proverbs 1:7)

NURTURE faith in your children. Let your home be filled with love, laughter, prayer and song. Tell your children that God loves them and has a plan for their lives. Let Jesus’ name be heard often in your home. Read great stories of the Bible. Make prayer a practice at mealtime, bedtime, and other times each day. Pray daily for the salvation of your children at an early age and for their lives to be lived wholly for Jesus Christ.

TAKE your children to church and let them grow up worshipping with you and seeing you serve Christ. God gives parents the support of a church community to share the seasons of life together. Too many neglect involvement in the church. A vibrant church can make all the difference in your walk with Christ, the strength of your family life, and the reality of a child’s faith.

Frequently Asked Questions about Baby Dedication

QUESTION

Why don't you baptize babies?

ANSWER

The practice of infant baptism is simply not found in the Bible. It comes out of history and church tradition. Baptism is one of two ordinances (baptism and the Lord's Supper) given to the church by the Lord Jesus Christ. Examples and directives for the proper practice of these ordinances are found throughout Scripture.

Baptism is for believers—those who have put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism is only seen in the Bible when someone receives Christ and confesses Him as Savior and Lord. Baptism pictures the death, burial and Resurrection of Christ, symbolizing life before Christ and a new life in Him. While the intent of infant baptism is to identify a child with the Christian faith, baptism cannot secure salvation. Each child must hear and respond to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

For this reason, we have a service of dedication to Christ for parents and their children, but we do not confuse this dedication with baptism, which follows a profession of faith. If you have questions about baptism, we will be glad to discuss them with you and provide guidance and opportunity to follow Christ according to His Word.

QUESTION

At what age can a child take part in a dedication service?

ANSWER

Our primary focus is on children from birth to 18 months. However, we deal with each family on an individual basis. Often children are adopted after this time and we support families who are beginning this exciting chapter of life.

QUESTION

Can a single parent participate in a baby dedication service?

ANSWER

Yes. We want to do all we can to encourage your walk with Christ. Single parenting is double duty in child rearing. As a church family, we desire to be part of your extended family. We hope to provide compassionate support, spiritual growth, and a variety of ministries to enable you to succeed in parenting your child “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” If you want to participate in a dedication and would like the support of your parents or another family member, we would gladly discuss this matter with you prior to the service and provide guidance on how they can take part.

QUESTION

Can the biological parents participate in a baby dedication if they are not married?

ANSWER

No. While we honor the life of each child and encourage parents married and unmarried to embrace the importance of spiritual commitment for children, a baby dedication is intended to reflect the teaching of Scripture on family life.

Understanding the sacred honor of marriage as presented in God's Word, we believe every public act of worship is to conform to His standards. To fail to recognize and honor the specific teaching of Scripture on matters of family life would violate the integrity of our church and the Savior we serve. For those who are unmarried or living together, taking steps to acknowledge and surrender to God's plan for their individual lives would take precedence over participation in a baby dedication.

Our goal in ministry is to meet people where they are in life, to lead them to God's grace and truth, and to help them discover life abundant in Christ and His church.

QUESTION

Do I need to attend the parent/baby dedication class if I have participated in a previous dedication?

ANSWER

Yes. This class is a critical component in our ministry to families. If you have participated in a dedication but have not attended the class, it is necessary for you to attend. Our goal in this class is to strengthen parents and families.

QUESTION

Do you provide reserved seating for grandparents and extended family?

ANSWER

Yes. We would not want your family to miss this important event in your life. Photos are allowed.

QUESTION

How can I get additional information on classes and ministries that may be of interest to my family?

ANSWER

You may go to the church website (prestonwood.org) for a complete listing of classes, ministries and growth groups, or call the church between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and request contact with a specific ministry area: preschool and children's ministry, student ministry, married adults, single adults, sports and recreation ministries, family-care ministries, and many more.

“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

PROVERBS 22:6

Scripture Passages for Parents

Deuteronomy 6:5–7

Deuteronomy 4:9

Psalms 78:1–7

Psalms 127

Proverbs 22:6

Proverbs 23:13

Proverbs 29:15

Proverbs 17:6

Ephesians 6:1–4

Colossians 3:21

Notes

“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

PROVERBS 22:6

We pray this booklet will help you to better understand the purpose of a parent/baby dedication and how we can help you begin this new season of your life.



Plano Campus | 6801 W. Park Blvd. | Plano, TX 75093
North Campus | 1001 Prosper Trail | Prosper, TX 75078
972-820-5000 | prestonwood.org