

You and Your Baby's Dedication

Please read this section thoroughly before completing any of the questions on the last page.

What does it mean to “dedicate” my child to the Lord?

The Bible clearly teaches what each person must do in order to receive eternal life. We must agree with God that we are sinners, we must repent of our sins, and we must receive, by faith, Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. This requires belief on our part that Jesus dies for our sins, and faith that he was raised from the dead and has given us eternal life. It is clear then, that this is a decision that must be made by someone old enough to understand the commitment they are making to the Lord. For some this may be at a very early age, or later in life, but salvation is a choice that must be made by each individual and cannot be made for them. There are no rituals or anything else that we can do for another person to ensure their eternal destiny. There are however, many things we can do as parents to teach our children about the Lord and to instruct them in His ways, in the hope that they will someday choose to follow Him, and accept Jesus as their personal Savior. We do not perform “baptism” on infants or very young children; we simply bring them and their parents before God and His people for prayer, and to make a vow to raise them according to His will. That is why we view this as more of a “parent” or family dedication than a baby dedication. You, as the parent God has given this child to, are vowing to commit your child to the Lord, to instruct them in His Word, to nurture and discipline them according to scripture, and to be a Godly example for them to follow. If you yourself are not a born-again Christian, and have not yet made a commitment to the Lord in your own life, then you will not be able to keep this vow. We therefore will not dedicate a parent to the Lord who does not know Him as their personal Savior. It would be hypocrisy for us to allow a parent who does not know the Jesus Christ as Lord to make a vow they cannot keep. There are many examples in the Bible of people who made vows to God, and then did not keep them. They were dealt with very severely. We do not want to encourage you to take part in an “empty” ritual. We see this as an act of protection, rather than rejection, and hope you will understand our viewpoint. The dedication of your family to God is something far too serious to be entered into lightly. It is our hope that this will help you to recognize the extent of the commitment you will be making.

What does God expect from me as a parent?

When you make a vow to raise your children for the Lord and to dedicate them to Him, He will give you wisdom and strength to do so. There are a few things you should do however, as part of keeping this promise. The following is a list (although not complete) of some of these things.

Pray constantly for your child.

A parent's responsibility to pray does not end at his child's dedication, but continues until the day he commits his own life to the Lord. We have an example of this in Job 1:5. In regards to his children, it says “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,’ Thus Job did continually.”

Instruct your child in the way of the Lord.

We are taught in Ephesians 6:4 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.”

Be a living example of Christ to your children.

It does not do any good to instruct your child in the ways of the Lord, if you do not “walk” what you “talk”. Proverbs 20:7 says, “ The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed (happy) are his children after him.” The reason for the blessed state of this man’s children is that they have someone to look up to as an example for their own behavior. We must strive to our children even as Christ is our example.

Discipline your children as the Lord would have you do.

The book of Proverbs gives us many practical teachings concerning the discipline we are to provide for our children. There is not enough room to list here, but we encourage you to read the following scriptures. Proverbs 29:15 & 17 / 13:24 / 19:18 / 22:15. It is clear from God’s word that by chastening or disciplining our children we are showing our love for them. This brings us to the motivation for discipline. Any discipline you give to your child should always be done for his profit and not as a release for your own anger 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, but rather chastens us in love. Colossians 3:21 says “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.” We are not to break the spirit, but instead to encourage spiritual growth. Discipline should be used to instruct, rather than to simply punish.

How old does my baby need to be?

As we explained earlier, since this is more for you than for your baby, there is no recommended age. The only thing we do ask is that your baby is old enough to hold its head up and be safely held. Generally we ask they be at least 3 months old.

How is the dedication done?

After your request has been approved, and the date verified, you simply need to show up at the service that has been chosen. We recommend that you arrive 15 minute early and check-in with either Pastor Steve or Dave, so we know that you are here and ready. Since we do not allow infants or young children in the Sanctuary for the entire service, you will first need to sign your children into Children’s Church (so that they can save room for them), and bring them back into the Sanctuary for the dedication. You are welcome to have any of you older children on stage with you for the dedication if you like. If you desire for other family members to stand with you, please indicate so on this form, or be sure to talk to us ahead of time. We are very limited for space on the stage. If you would like, the ushers can reserve the front row for your family, and they are welcome to stand and take photographs or video if desired. You will be asked to come up on stage after the first couple of songs and announcements are completed at the beginning of the service. At this time Pastor Steve will briefly explain the meaning of your dedication, and then pray for you and your child. After this you will need to take your baby and any other children to the Children’s Church for the remainder of the service, and then you may return to your seat.

Baby Dedication Questionnaire

Dear Parent,

It is our hope and desire here at Calvary Chapel for the parents of each child being dedicated to the Lord to have a Biblical understanding of what "Baby Dedication" signifies. This is why we have asked you to read this material, and why we would like for you to help us by answering a few brief questions. Be assured that all of the information on this form will be kept confidential, and is only for the purpose of assisting us in preparing for your child's dedication.

Thank You

Date: ___/___/___

Your name: _____ Age: _____

Spouses Name: _____ Age: _____

Phone #: home _____ work _____

Full name of child to be dedicated: _____

Girl _____ Boy _____

Birth date ___/___/___ Place of birth _____

Please indicate the date you are requesting for your child's dedication: ___/___/___

If there is a guest speaker or some other special event scheduled for the same Sunday we will need to move to another date.

Which service: 2nd (9:00am) _____ or 3rd (10:30am) _____ Other _____

Note: We prefer to do Dedications during the 9:00am or 10:30am services. If you prefer another service, please indicate.

If you need more space to answer the following questions, please use the back of this sheet.

- Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? _____
- If so, how long have you been a Christian? _____
- Is your spouse a Christian? _____
- Briefly describe your conversion experience _____

• How long have you been attending Calvary Chapel Lake Elsinore? _____

• If less than six months, where did you attend church before? _____

• Please describe in your own words what having your baby dedicated means to you, and why you are desiring to do so _____

Office use only: Pastor's approval _____ Completed Certificate given