

# BABY DEDICATION

AT THE RED DOOR COMMUNITY CHURCH

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## WHAT WE BELIEVE

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honour and obey their parents.

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### **HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL:**

If you are considering having your baby dedicated at The Red Door Community Church, the following is some background information for you as parents to help your understanding on why we dedicate our children, ourselves as parents and our family to God. Also included are the vows you will make on the day of the dedication before God and your faith family.

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## **WHAT IS A BABY DEDICATION?**

God delights in children. He takes great pleasure in them. They are one of the greatest gifts He gives to husbands and wives. Psalm 127:3 proclaims that "Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him." Because children are a gift from God, it is natural that Christian parents present and dedicate their child to God. In the Gospels we read that people brought little children and babies to Jesus so that he might place his hands on them and pray for them.

Dedicating a child acknowledges God's sovereignty not only over the child, but also over the Parents. Parents present their child before God and His people, the church, asking for grace and wisdom in carrying out their responsibilities. Parents also come praying that their child might one day trust Jesus Christ as Saviour for the forgiveness of sin.

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 child is not an accident or a mistake. The child 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.

## **AN OPPORTUNITY TO CELEBRATE**

In I 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 my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore I also have given him to the Lord; as long as he lives he shall be given 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 and the blessing of children 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 child. 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.

A dedication service is as much for the parent as for the child. Following the statement of Hannah's grateful expression of praise to God, the Bible says Hannah and Elkanah worshiped the Lord in the temple. They gave public witness to their commitment to honour God's plan for their child and serve as partners in the task of honouring 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 the book of 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 honour 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 honour 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.

The final ingredient in a baby dedication service 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. While no church is perfect in all it provides for parents and children, the commitment of our community is to do all we can to raise both you and your child to be fully devoted followers of Jesus.

## 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 Jesus. 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 Saviour 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 the universal problem called sin. The Bible is clear about this: "...for all have sinned and fallen 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 Saviour. Once you have experienced forgiveness and received the gift of new life in Christ, you have a new capacity to lead, love, and live. 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, worship, 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 day by day 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 honour 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 service 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 wisdom." (Proverbs 1:7)

Nurture faith in your children. Let your home be filled with love, laughter, prayer, and faith. 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, bed time, 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.

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. A 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.

## THE VOWS

Parents, by coming forward before God and his people, you are declaring your desire to dedicate yourselves and your child to the Lord and that you enter into the following commitment in the presence of God and his people.

So that your child may walk in the abundant life that Christ offers, do you vow by God's help and in partnership with the church, to provide your child with a Christian home of love and peace, to raise them in the truth of our Lord's instruction and discipline, to champion the cause of Christ in their life and in so doing, encourage them to one day trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord?

## SCRIPTURE PASSAGES FOR PARENTS

### PROVERBS 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

### DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

### DEUTERONOMY 4:9

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

### PSALM 78:1-7

My people, hear my teaching;  
listen to the words of my mouth.  
I will open my mouth with a parable;  
I will utter hidden things, things from of old—  
things we have heard and known,  
things our ancestors have told us.  
We will not hide them from their descendants;  
we will tell the next generation  
the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,  
his power, and the wonders he has done.  
He decreed statutes for Jacob  
and established the law in Israel,  
which he commanded our ancestors  
to teach their children,  
so the next generation would know them,  
even the children yet to be born,  
and they in turn would tell their children.  
Then they would put their trust in God  
and would not forget his deeds  
but would keep his commands.



## **PROVERBS 22:6**

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

## **PROVERBS 23:13**

Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish them with the rod, they will not die.

## **PROVERBS 29:15**

A rod and a reprimand impart wisdom, but a child left undisciplined disgraces its mother.

## **PROVERBS 17:6**

Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.

## **EPHESIANS 6:1-4**

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" - which is the first commandment with a promise - "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

## **COLOSSIANS 3:21**

Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

## **PSALM 127**

Unless the Lord builds the house,  
the builders labor in vain.  
Unless the Lord watches over the city,  
the guards stand watch in vain.  
In vain you rise early  
and stay up late,  
toiling for food to eat—  
for he grants sleep to those he loves.

Children are a heritage from the Lord,  
offspring a reward from him.  
Like arrows in the hands of a warrior  
are children born in one's youth.  
Blessed is the man  
whose quiver is full of them.  
They will not be put to shame  
when they contend with their opponents in court.



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