

PARENT/CHILD DEDICATION

Joseph and Mary presented Jesus to the Lord according to the law regarding the first born. Hannah gave Samuel to the Lord, for His service, in gratitude for the gift of a son. Strictly speaking, these are not justifications for today's practice of dedicating a child to the Lord. There is ample Scriptural warrant for the public declaration of thanksgiving for God's every good gift, for public determination to raise children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and to have one's life and home instruments for the eternal welfare of the children entrusted by the heavenly Father. This is, then, not a giving of the child to God, but a dedication of parents to God on behalf of their children for His glory.

The appropriate parental requirements therefore are:

1. A personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior;
2. A commitment of each parent to the other in faithful marriage, in mutual love, respect, submission, and nurture.
3. A commitment to the church of Jesus Christ in faithful membership, attendance, and service;
4. A commitment to work together for the spiritual character of the home;
5. A commitment to so live, teach, and witness that their child may believe in Christ as his/her Savior and continue to mature in Christ and in the knowledge of God's Word.

May a parent with an unsaved or unwilling spouse make such a dedication? Yes; it is a Scriptural principle that one is responsible to give according to what he has, not according to what he does not have. It is obvious that the desire inherent in the commitment may be hindered, but it is God who is able.

It is of interest that such dedications may be traced back to colonial Baptist and even to Anabaptists during the Reformation era. But from the earliest days of the Baptist witness, dedications, when practiced, were clearly distinguished from Baptism of any sort. Baptism is a public declaration of one's faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Lord, and is the initial Scriptural expression of one's desire and determination to be identified with Christ as His disciple. It is, therefore, completely inappropriate for an infant.

If it is your desire to dedicate yourself on behalf of your child, please fill out the form below, detach it and give it to the pastor or church office.

PARENT/BABY DEDICATION REQUEST

Full name of the Father

Full name of the Mother

Full name of the child

What do you call the child?

Birthdate

Birthplace (city)

[If you wish some other name, e.g. Bob rather than Robert, used on the dedication certificate instead of your formal name, write it here: _____]