

# CHILD DEDICATION



*As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.*

Joshua 24:15

**Let the little children come to me  
and do not hinder them  
for the kingdom of God  
belongs to such as these.**

Mark 10:14



# A Parent Commitment

## Instructions from Deuteronomy

In the book of Deuteronomy, God gives some very specific instructions regarding raising children. The word “Deuteronomy” means “repetition of the law”.

Throughout Deuteronomy Moses is “repeating” the basic will and commands of God to the Israelites. If you were to read the entire book, it would sound like a broken record.

### Why does Moses write the book of Deuteronomy this way?

- Deuteronomy 6:2                      Fear of the LORD so you may enjoy long life

### What does the Bible say will allow us to enjoy long life?

- Deuteronomy 6:4-7                      Love the Lord
- Deuteronomy 6:10-12                      Don't forget the Lord
- Deuteronomy 6:13-19                      Follow and serve the Lord, not other gods
- Deuteronomy 6:20-25                      Obey the Lord

### What does the Bible say is the key to making this happen in your home?

- Deuteronomy 6:6                      To have these things upon YOUR HEARTS

It starts with YOU, the parent. You cannot lead where you have not been.

## The Beginning of a Journey

As the spiritual leaders in your child's life, the dedication of your child is only the beginning of a lifelong journey you will take as a family. If you want your child to love the Lord, follow the Lord, make godly decisions and obey the Lord, then YOU need to love the Lord, follow the Lord and obey the Lord!

Faith is caught as much as it is taught. Modeling faith in your life and working it into the rhythms of your home is more influential than anything the church can do.

Mom and dad are two to three times more influential than any church program!

What then is the role of the church?

- To equip you, the parents, to pass on the faith to their children.
- To reestablish the home as the primary place where faith is nurtured .
- To be a lifelong partner for you and your family.

## **Invite Others on the Journey With You**

It truly does take a village to raise a child and the same is true for their spiritual development. Consider a couple of the following:

- Ask a couple people or couples you believe did a good job raising their children to know and follow Jesus to be godparents
- Become involved in a community of believers if you are not already. Provide your child the opportunity to grow among people who will contribute to their spiritual journey

**These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.**

**Deuteronomy 6:1-2**



# The Ceremony

## What is a Child Dedication Ceremony?

Child dedication is a public ceremony where Christian parents prayerfully invite God to work in their child's life and state their intention to raise their child to glorify and love His Son, Jesus Christ.

## What is the Significance of the Ceremony?

### 1. We acknowledge publicly that our child is a gift from God.

*Then God said, "Let us make people in our own image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all of life – the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals, and small animals." So God created people in His own image; God patterned them after Himself; male and female He created them.*

Genesis 1:26,27

### 2. In an act of consecration we return the gift to the Giver.

Consecrate is to set apart someone or something for God to use for His good purposes. When you dedicate your child you make a settled decision to entrust your child to God. This is both your acknowledgement of God's claim on your child's life as Creator and Savior, and also an act of submission on your part. You are saying you understand that your child is ultimately accountable to God, and that you desire God to use your child as He sees fit; to advance His good and sovereign purposes in our world.

*When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.*

Luke 2:22

### 3. Together, we ask God to draw our child to Jesus.

Each person is responsible for choosing their own response to Christ and their own spiritual destiny. This is crucial for us to grasp for our own spiritual well being, and it also helps us understand the significance of dedicating our children to God.

*Don't you realize that whatever you choose to obey becomes your master? You can choose sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God and receive his approval.*

Romans 6:16

Just as your parents could not choose Jesus for us, so we cannot choose Him for our children! We can, however, pray and live in such a way that our kids will see the reality of Jesus in our lives and be drawn in His direction!

*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.*

John 6:44

**4. We renew our own personal commitment to Christ as individuals and parents.**

*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you have learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

2 Timothy 3:14-15



# Common Questions

## 1. Why dedication, not christening or baptism?

As we all know, different churches have different traditions. While we would never criticize or condemn the practice of another church, we are persuaded that dedicating a child to God most closely conforms to the biblical pattern. The Old Testament law of bringing a child to the temple to be presented to the Lord seems to have the principle of consecration at its heart. The incident in which parents brought kids to Jesus to bless and pray for them is further foundation for the practice of dedication.

Furthermore, the totality of New Testament teaching on baptism affirms it as a step of obedience to Christ after one has come to believe on Him and entrust one's life to Him. Since infants and young children are not yet capable of deciding on their personal response to Christ, nor of choosing baptism as a willful step of obedience to Christ, it appears that baptism is not appropriate for an infant. We reserve baptism as an individual's public expression of faith in Jesus Christ and child dedication is primarily a commitment on behalf of parents.

## 2. What commitment am I making when I dedicate my child to God?

Parents, in presenting your children to the Lord, you enter into a solemn relationship with God, who keeps his covenant to a thousand generations. Throughout the ages, parents have presented their children to God in dedication. You follow a noble heritage.

Believing that your child is a gift from God, and recognizing that you cannot take your child spiritually where you have not gone yourselves, will you now commit to:

- solemnly confess that it is your desire to dedicate him/her to the Lord, and to God's purpose?
- pray for your child and protect him/her?
- teach your child the stories and truths of the Bible?
- show your child how to read the Bible for themselves, and take your child to church regularly where he/she can worship together with other Christians?
- do all that is in your power to model a life of discipleship and encourage your child to follow after Jesus as their Savior and Lord?

## 3. Can I dedicate my child if I have not committed by life to Christ?

At Cochrane Alliance Church we recognize that people are at different points in their spiritual journey. We may dedicate the child of someone who has not yet committed his or her life to Christ but who is moving in that direction. However, in order to preserve the spiritual integrity of the dedication service and keep it from becoming an empty ritual, all parents must be willing to make the same commitments as a Christian parent.

