

Baby Dedication

"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward." (Psalm 127:3)

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." (Deut 6:4-7)

The idea of dedicating a child to God is found in the Bible. We know that Hannah, who was a barren woman, prayed for a child. She told the Lord that if she could bear a child she would dedicate it to the Lord. (1 Samuel 1:11). We also know that Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus to the temple for a dedication which was common (Luke 2:22). Let us stand and read an account.

²⁴ Now when Hannah had weaned Samuel, she took him up with her, with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh. And the child *was* young. ²⁵ Then they slaughtered a bull, and brought the child to Eli. ²⁶ And she said, "O my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I *am* the woman who stood by you here, praying to the LORD. ²⁷ For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. ²⁸ Therefore I also have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the LORD." So they worshiped the LORD there. (1 Samuel 1:24-28)

²² When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons." (Luke 2:22)

"It is my great joy to introduce you to these newest members of our church family, Aaron & Stephanie Martin. They are the parents of EJ who was born on _____ here in Grimes County. These parents have come today to pledge themselves before God and this congregation to raise this child in a way the honors the LORD."

Parental Affirmations to God

The pastor then reads the following affirmations (printed in the bulletin for the congregation to read along). After each statement the parents will respond "WE DO."

- Do you today recognize these children as the gifts of God and give heartfelt thanks for God's blessing?

- Do you now dedicate your children to the Lord who gave them to you all, surrendering all worldly claims upon their lives in the hope that they will belong wholly to God?
- Do you pledge as parents that, with God's fatherly help, you will bring up your children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, making every reasonable effort, with patience and love, to build the Word of God, the character of Christ and the joy of the Lord into their lives?
- Do you promise to provide, through God's blessing, for the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs of your children, looking to your own heavenly Father for the wisdom, love and strength to serve them and not use them?
- Do you promise, God helping you, to make it your regular prayer that, by God's grace, your children will come to trust in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of their sins and for the fulfillment of all his promises to them, even eternal life; and in this faith follow Jesus as Lord and obey his teachings?

Pastors and several elders pray over the child to dedicate it.