

Parent/Child Dedication

at LIVING HOPE BIBLE CHURCH

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 honor and obey their parents.

HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL:

If you are considering having your child dedicated at Living Hope Bible 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 "forever" family of faith in Christ.

WHAT IS A CHILD 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 "children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is 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 (Mt. 19:13-14).

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 Savior for the forgiveness of sin.

A child 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 me my petition that I made to him.²⁸ Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord" (1 Sam. 1:27-28). 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 child 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.

Because this is a celebration, we hope you will invite many friends and family to this special day.

Yes, a child dedication is a celebration of God's gift, but there is more...

A COMMITMENT TO GOD'S PLAN

A child 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 child 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 honor God's plan for their child and serve as partners in the task of honoring 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 honor 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 honor 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 child 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 child 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 child 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 Savior and Lord. Today, we read and hear about dysfunctional families. Maybe you have struggled to over-come 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 nurture and discipline, and to encourage them to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES FOR PARENTS

PROVERBS 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go; even 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. ⁵You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You 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. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

DEUTERONOMY 4:9

Only take care, and keep [WATCH] your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children—

PSALM 78:1-7

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;
incline your ears to the words of my mouth!
² I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings from of old,
³ things that we have heard and known,
that our fathers have told us.
⁴ We will not hide them from their children,
but tell to the coming generation
the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might,
and the wonders that he has done.
⁵ He established a testimony in Jacob
and appointed a law in Israel,
which he commanded our fathers
to teach to their children,
⁶ that the next generation might know them,
the children yet unborn,
and arise and tell them to their children,
⁷ so that they should set their hope in God
and not forget the works of God,
but keep his commandments;

PROVERBS 22:6

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

PROVERBS 23:13

Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die.

PROVERBS 29:15

The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

PROVERBS 17:6

Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their fathers.

EPHESIANS 6:1-4

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” ⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

COLOSSIANS 3:21

Fathers, do not provoke [EMBITTER) your children, lest they become discouraged.

PSALM 127

Unless the LORD builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.

Unless the LORD watches over the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.

²It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,

eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives to his beloved sleep.

³Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD,
the fruit of the womb a reward.

⁴Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the children of one's youth.

⁵Blessed is the man
who fills his quiver with them!

He shall not be put to shame
when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD

Child's full name: _____

Father's name: _____

Mother's name: _____

Vital Birth Information

Time of Birth: _____

Length at Birth: _____

Weight at Birth: _____



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