

BABY DEDICATION

It is our desire at Calvary Chapel of Antelope Valley for the parents of each child being dedicated to the Lord to have a Biblical understanding of what "baby dedication" signifies. With this as our goal, we would like you to help us by answering a few brief questions. Please be assured that all information is confidential and is only used to assist us in preparing for your child's dedication.

Parent's Name(s) _____ Age(s) _____

Address _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____

Child's (Or Children's) Full Name(s): _____

Birth Date(s) _____

Hospital _____ City _____

Please answer the following questions. Use the back side if further space is needed.

1. Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? (Yes/No) _____ When?
2. Briefly describe your conversion experience.
3. How long have you been attending Calvary Chapel of Antelope Valley?
4. What does having your baby dedicated mean to you?

YOUR BABY DEDICATION

At Calvary Chapel of Antelope Valley

NAME(S) OF CHILD (OR CHILDREN) BEING DEDICATED: _____

DATE OF DEDICATION: _____ PASTOR TO PERFORM DEDICATION: _____

Things to do

1. Please get to the church early and get the proper coupons to check your children into their Sunday School classrooms first. Try to be there at least 15 minutes before services. If family and friends are invited please ask them to also arrive early to assure a seat where they may want to sit.
2. When you arrive, please see one of the pastors to let them know of the dedication to make sure we are ready.
3. You may bring your other children on stage if you wish, but please, **DO NOT invite anyone else on stage with you** that has not been first approved by the pastor you met with at the pre-dedication appointment.
4. Please explain to your family that Video and/or Picture taking is allowed, but please, be sensitive of the others around the sanctuary. Do not stand up in front of others or approach the stage. The pastor would be glad to pose with you and your child AFTER the services if you would like. (We desire that the attention be on the dedication - not a proud relative).
5. Depending on your preferences and the disposition of your child, the pastor may or may not hold your child. Some children will not go easily to a stranger. Please inform the pastor if your child is reluctant to go to others ahead of time.
6. **DO NOT** try to have your baby dedicated if he or she is sick.
 - We will be glad to re-schedule with you at another time.
 - To reschedule call the church office at (661) 942-0404 Tuesday – Friday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm or Saturday, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
7. **We generally DO NOT dedicate a child that is over 3 years of age.**
(If you have any questions regarding this please ask one of the pastors)
8. All dedications are done 2nd service on Sunday mornings unless approved of by the senior pastor in advance.
 - The pastor performing the dedication will call you on stage with him, probably after the music portion of the worship service.
9. **Please review these instructions again the morning of the dedication.**
10. After the dedication, if you have acquired Sunday school coupons for your children, you may take your child to their respective classrooms and return to the service.

YOU AND YOUR BABY

*"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord,
and the fruit of the womb is His reward."*

(Psalm 127:3)

We, as Christians, have a tremendous responsibility given to us when the Lord blesses us with a child. By doing so, He entrusts us with the responsibility of raising up that child in the way of the Lord and establishing early in his life, a foundation built upon Jesus Christ. It is this tremendous responsibility that causes us to think of baby dedication as "family dedications." We feel that the whole family unit needs to be lifted up to the Lord so that each member will be able to keep his or her responsibilities.

But first, what exactly is involved in "dedicating" your child to the Lord? As mentioned previously, children are a heritage from the Lord. He gives them to us to bless us, and because of this we must be willing to give them back to Him. Referring to the loss of his sons and daughters, Job proclaimed, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD"(JOB 1:21). Job realized that the Lord God had given him his children and that He was also the only one who could take them away. We too must be willing to totally submit our children to the will of our Father.

A perfect example of "dedicating" a child to the Lord is given to us in I Samuel 1:11, 26-28. Hannah, being barren (or without child) for many years, was weeping before the Lord because of her condition. As she was weeping, she made a vow to God. "And she vowed a vow, and said, 'O Lord of Hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of Thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget Thine handmaid, but wilt give unto Thy handmaid a man child, THEN WILL I GIVE HIM UNTO THE LORD ALL THE DAYS OF HIS LIFE...'"(I Samuel 1:11). God honored Hannah's request and gave her a son named Samuel. Hannah then, in keeping her vow, dedicated (or set apart) Samuel unto the Lord.

We see here a beautiful example of what our attitudes should be towards our children and their relationship to God. We are to do the most we can to "set apart" our children to God until the day that they can make their own choice (something all of us must do at one time or another). By dedicating our children to the Lord we are making a vow to raise them in His ways and not our own. We are committing ourselves to this promises and we must do all we can to keep it. The following is a list (though not exhaustive), of some of the things we who are parents should do as part of keeping our vow.

1. PRAY CONSTANTLY FOR YOUR CHILD.

A parent's responsibility to pray for their child does not end at his dedication but continues until the day he commits his own life to the Lord. Job gives us an example of this in Job 1:5..."Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all, for Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.' Thus did Job continually."

2. INSTRUCT YOUR CHILD IN THE WAY OF THE LORD.

We are taught in Ephesians 6:4 (NIV) to "Bring them (your children) up in the training and instruction of the Lord." And Proverbs 22:6 adds, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and

when he is old, he will not depart from it." If we, while our children are young, instruct them in His ways, it is highly likely that these ways will develop into a lifelong commitment.

3. BE A LIVING EXAMPLE OF CHRIST TO YOUR CHILDREN.

It does not do your child any good to instruct him in the ways of the Lord if you yourself do not walk what you talk. Therefore, you must always be examining yourself and your witness to your children. In Proverbs 20:7 the Bible says, "The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed (happy) are his children after him." The main reason for the blessed state of this man's children is that they have someone to look up to and use as an example to model their own behavior. We as parents must strive to be that example to our children even as Christ is our example.

4. DISCIPLINE OUR CHILDREN IN THE SAME WAY THE LORD DISCIPLINES US.

The book of Proverbs teaches us many practical aspects concerning the discipline we are to provide for our children. Some of the Scriptures that relate to this subject are as follows:

*"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself
bringeth his mother to shame; correct thy son and he shall
give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul."
(Proverbs 29:15, 17)*

*"He that spareth the rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him
chasteneth him betimes (early)."
(Proverbs 13:24)*

Other references: Proverbs 19:18; 22:15

As you see, by chastening or disciplining your child you are showing your love for him. This brings us to the motivation for discipline. Any discipline you give your child should be done for his profit and not as a release for your own anger and/or frustration. Remember, you are to discipline your child in the same way the Lord disciplines you. God never strikes at His children in anger, and you shouldn't either. Colossians 3:21 (Amplified Version) reads, "Fathers, do not provoke or irritate or fret your children - do not be hard or harass them, lest they become discouraged and sullen and morose and feel inferior and frustrated; DO NOT BREAK THEIR SPIRIT."

We as parents are not in the business of breaking our children's spirits, but instead we are to encourage their spiritual growth. Explain to them why you must discipline them, carry out that discipline, and then most importantly, LOVE THEM. If you are able to do this, then you will be disciplining your children in the way the Lord would have you.

As I mentioned previously, these are but a few of the responsibilities that God calls us to as parents. It hardly needs to be said that if you yourself are not a born-again Christian, these responsibilities will be impossible to keep. This is why at Calvary Chapel Antelope Valley, we will decline any request to dedicate a parent to the Lord who does not know Him as his personal Lord and Savior. We will dedicate your child and the part who does in fact have a relationship

with Jesus Christ, but it would be an act of hypocrisy for us to allow a parent who does not know Jesus Christ to make a vow to Him that he cannot keep. We read in Proverbs 20:25, (Amplified Version) "It is a snare to a man to utter a vow (of consecration) rashly, and not until afterward inquire (whether he can fulfill it)." Other scriptures relating to this point are Numbers 30:2, Deuteronomy 23:21-31, and Ecclesiastes 5:4.

There are instances recorded for us in the Bible where individuals made vows before the Lord and did not keep them. As a result of breaking their vows, these people were dealt with severely by God (i.e. Ananias and Saphira, Acts 5:1-11). We cannot allow people to make a vow to the Lord if they do not have the ability to fulfill the responsibilities that go along with making that vow. We view this as an act of protection, and not as one of rejection.

Hopefully you can now understand our viewpoint as being totally Biblical. The dedication of your family to God is something too serious to be entered into lightly. It is hoped that this paper has helped you to recognize the extent of this commitment you will be making. If you have any questions concerning anything that has been said, or not covered here, please write them down and ask them in your upcoming appointment.

*"Jesus said, 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto Me: for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.'
(Matt. 14:11)*