

MHBC Family and Child Dedication Policy

The Purpose of Family and Child Dedication

Family and Child Dedication is not a biblical command, however it is something that we see in Scripture (1 Samuel 1:27-28, Luke 2:22). The word “dedication” means to consecrate or set someone apart for the purpose of honoring God. Therefore, when we have family and child dedication, we are declaring our desire to raise a child in the knowledge and understanding of the Lord. It is not a statement of salvation for your child, neither is it baptism. Instead, it is a time for you to publicly declare your commitment to live out the calling of Deuteronomy 6:5-9:

⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ 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. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

We incorporate this time as a part of our worship services because it should be done within the context of a church family who will commit to walking with you, holding you accountable, and providing wisdom, guidance, and help as you seek to raise your children.

Who Can Participate in Family and Child Dedication?

As a church family, we take Family and Child Dedication seriously because we believe that children are a blessing and that our calling as parents is one of the most important callings that God’s places in the life of his followers. As a church family, we take seriously our calling to help you along the journey of parenting. Based on the purposes of Family and Child Dedication and biblical commands, we ask that the parents or guardians seeking to dedicate their child and family are:

- *Born-again believers who are seeking to live a life that is honoring to God and faithful to the commands that He has given us.*
- *Members of Malvern Hill Baptist Church*
- *Committed to raising the child within the church family of Malvern Hill Baptist Church*

Because this is a commitment of the family (specifically the parents or guardians entrusted with this child) to raising the child to know and love God, those participating in the dedication must know and love God themselves. Furthermore, the dedication is also a commitment from our church family to loving, caring, and teaching the child as well as loving, caring, and equipping the parents to raise their

child. Therefore, the parents or guardians need to be members of our church family who have committed themselves to our church. The child also needs to be an active part of our church family so that our church can uphold their commitment to help the child grow in knowledge and understanding of God.

Can a single parent participate in Family and Child Dedication?

Yes! A parent who meets the qualifications above (born-again, seeking to live a life that is honoring to God, and who is a member of Malvern Hill Baptist Church) can participate in Family and Child Dedication. We recognize that single parents face a difficult road in parenting their children and we are committed to supporting single parents provide a Christian foundation for their child's upbringing.

What does Family and Child Dedication involve?

During our Sunday morning worship service, we will have the parents or guardians come forward with their family including the child(ren) who we are dedicating. The senior pastor will give a charge to the families and to the church reminding us of our responsibilities as we make this commitment. The pastor will then issue vows of commitment and dedication to both the congregation and the parents who will respond with "We do" or "We will."