

# CHILD DEDICATION & BAPTISM

## *THE PURPOSE*

The dedication of infants and children is an opportunity for parents and family to offer their children to the Lord and dedicate themselves to the rearing of their children for the glory of God. Though parents may dedicate children of any age, this is generally done in infancy.

In 1 Samuel 1 & 2 the Bible tells how Hannah had prayed to the Lord for a son, and after much crying out to the Lord, she finally conceived. Hannah has promised that her son Samuel would be dedicated to the Lord. "Now I am giving him to the Lord, and he will belong to the Lord his whole life." (vs. 28)

As a baby, Jesus was dedicated by His parents. (Luke 2:22-25) Jesus also bestowed "blessings to the children." (Mark 10:16) And Jesus, being fully human, grew in "wisdom and stature, in favor with God and men." (Luke 2:52)

The purpose of child dedication is:

\*To give parents of young children an opportunity to recognize God's gift of children to them. (Psalm 127:3)

\*For parents to declare their intent to raise their children in a Christian environment. (Deuteronomy 6:5-7)

\*A challenge to parents to spiritually guide and educate their children, (Ephesians 6:4) and to lay a foundation of learning about God. (Proverbs 22:6)

\*A challenge to family, friends, and the church family as a whole to support this family in prayer and other needs as they raise their children to know, love, and serve Jesus. (Matthew 19:13-15)

This dedication is not a Baptism. It is not a sacrament. It does not impart salvation to the child. A child dedication is viewed as a confirmation between parents and the church family to raise the child in a godly way until the child is old enough to make his or her own decision.

Parents cannot "decide" their children's salvation for them. When children are old enough to understand the concept of sin and their responsibility for that sin before God, they can be ready to make a decision about salvation. Parents can, however, lay that foundation by their example and teaching, which will help their children prepare to make that decision when the time comes.

## *WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE IN DEDICATION & BAPTISM?*

This is a question many parents have regarding their infants and young children. Since families at The Bridge come from various religious and cultural backgrounds, this explanation has been prepared to assist you:

***Who can be baptized?*** All believers are encouraged to be baptized (Acts 2:41, 8:12,13). A personal confession of faith in Christ secures salvation. The only requirement for Baptism is belief in Jesus Christ. We do not baptize children until they are old enough to understand and verbalize their faith.

***What is Baptism?*** It is a symbol of Christ's burial and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:3,Colossians 2:12). It is a symbol of your new life as a Christian (2 Corinthians 5:17,Romans 6:4), and a declaration that you are a follower of Christ.

Baptism does not make you a Christian. It communicates publicly your personal confession of Christ as your Savior and your decision to serve and follow Him. Baptism does not save you. Only your faith in Christ saves you. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith. It is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:9).

The dedication of infants and children is an opportunity for parents and family to offer their children to the Lord and dedicate themselves to the rearing of their children for the glory of God.

## ***FAMILY VERSE AND VALUES***

Our challenge to you is to choose a family verse – a verse (or short passage) that encompasses what you desire for your family and for each member's relationship with God. Some examples are: Joshua 24:15; Deuteronomy 12:12,18; Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Psalm 128. There are many great verses to encourage your family; this is a family decision worthy of much study and prayer.

We encourage you to establish some family values together: three or four goals your family wants to focus on in the years ahead. These might include laughter, service, adventure, fun or life-long learning. The family verse and/or family values will be incorporated into the dedication for your children. We will challenge your community of friends and family to hold you responsible, through the years, to keep this verse and these values at the forefront of your life together, drawing your relationship with Christ to the center of your relationships as a family. This shall be your marker before God, and your family "may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, so that you may fear the Lord your God forever" (Joshua 4:24).

## ***HOW TO SCHEDULE A DEDICATION OR BAPTISM***

If you would like to be baptized or have your infant or child dedicated please contact The Bridge office at (805) 975-7178 or by email at [tbcc-office@thebridgechristianchurch.org](mailto:tbcc-office@thebridgechristianchurch.org).

We look forward to joining you in taking this next step in your faith.