

City Church believes children are a gift from God, and we are very excited that you are exploring parent-child dedication.

Parent-Child dedication is a public commitment you make before God, your church and your family. The dedication service provides you, the parent(s), an opportunity to express publically your desire to lead and spiritually nurture your child in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, **so your child will develop a desire to love God and love others.**

Listed below are frequently asked questions about child dedication. Take time to review them to find answers to any questions you may have.

What is the biblical purpose and history of a parent-child dedication?

The scriptural root of a child dedication is found in **1 Samuel 1:27–28** (NLT), where a godly woman named Hannah prayed year after year for God to give her a child. He answered her prayer and she gave birth to a son, whom she named Samuel. When Samuel was born, Hannah said these words:

"I asked the LORD to give me this boy, and he granted my request. Now I am giving him to the LORD, and he will belong to the LORD his whole life."

In Luke chapter 2 of the New Testament, following the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph took the infant Jesus to the temple and dedicated Him.

In both Scripture passages, the parents entrusted their child completely to God.

The writings of Moses found in **Deuteronomy 6:5–9** describe God's plan for how a parent should raise up a child:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

One key step in marking your desire to nurture your child in the ways of God is to dedicate him or her to God publically, through parent-child dedication.

Do I need to be a City Church member to participate in parent-child dedication at City Church?

You do not need to be a member of City Church to have your child dedicated. We do encourage parents to make sure they are calling City Church their home church. Why? **In dedicating your child to God, you are stating that you are willing to partner with God and the church to raise your child in cooperation with God's intentions.** To partner with any church, a parent would be wise to decide if he or she agrees with its beliefs and vision, so they can be all-in in their partnership with the church.

When you choose to become a member at City Church, you are stating that you agree with City Church's beliefs and values, and that you want City Church to be your home church.

To have your child dedicated at City Church:

- We ask parents to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- We ask parents to be sure their beliefs line up with those of City Church (can be found on our website www.thecitychurch.cc under the *ABOUT TAB*).
- We ask parents to have attended City Church for several months
- Because parent-child dedication involves making a commitment as a family to follow God, parents co-habituating outside of marriage would be unable to make this vow or participate in the ceremony. We ask parents who are living together and who are not married to take steps to acknowledge and surrender to God's plan for their relationship before participating in a parent-child dedication service.

Our belief is God's plan for marriage is between one man and one woman under the covenant of marriage.

Our goal is not to turn any family away, but instead to help lead parents into a God honoring relationship before choosing to participate in parent-child dedication.

We are open to having conversations with you on any of the above statements. If you are interested, contact the Family Ministries office at (423) 648-2971.

Can a single parent participate in a parent-child dedication service?

Yes! Parent-Child dedication signifies the commitment of parents, **including single parents**, to do their best to raise their child to be a follower of Christ.

Additionally, we highly encourage single parents to dedicate their child as they commit themselves to raise him or her without the presence or partnership of a spouse. The decision to dedicate a child is not dependent upon the beliefs of the ex-spouse; however we encourage single parents to discuss child dedication with their ex-spouse.

Ideally, both parents—even if not married—would still commit to the dedication of their child to God. We acknowledge that this is often not possible, and that it takes extra effort for a single parent to raise a child. As a church, City Church is committed to supporting single parents in providing a Christian foundation for their child’s upbringing.

Can parent(s) assign godparents?

Although the term “godparent” is not used at City Church, we do welcome parents to invite friends and family members committed to supporting them to stand with them during the dedication. The presence of these significant adults symbolizes their commitment to play a supportive role in the child’s spiritual development.

At what age can a child take part in a parent-child dedication service?

While City Church does not have a set age requirement for child dedication, the average age for a child to be dedicated is four to eight months old, although parents can dedicate children younger or older than that, often for the following reasons:

- The parent(s) are new believers in Christ and their children were not dedicated when they were infants.
- The parent(s) are having a younger child dedicated and want to have their older child dedicated at the same time

What can I expect during a parent-child dedication ceremony?

During the dedication service, parents express vows before God, their family, and the church, declaring their desire to raise their child in a God-honoring way. Because parents are the key role models for their children, they play a primary role in the dedication service.

Parents will be asked to affirm the following commitments:

- Do you receive this child with gratitude, as God’s gift to you and your family?
- Do you commit to each other as parents, creating a stable environment in which your child can mature? Will you make a covenant to strengthen your marriage relationship?
- Do you commit to be parents of personal faith, recognizing your children are more likely to follow God’s path by the model they first observe in you?

- Do you commit to lead a faith-filled home that honors God in all your relationships and in the choices you make in spiritually growing your family?
- Do you commit to be parents with patience, recognizing that with your inherent strengths and weaknesses, your desire to shape your child is a loving act that will require time, prayer, and God in order to produce in your children what He and you hope for?

If you have signed up to participate in a parent-child dedication service, **we ask that you attend one of two scheduled orientations.** After you have signed up an email will be sent informing you of the date, time and location of the orientation. There'll be a conversation on what it means to raise a spiritual champion and give you an opportunity to ask any questions you might have. **Attending this orientation is required in order for you and your child to participate in parent-child dedication.**

Child-dedication is not a sacrament; nor does it impart grace or salvation to a child. Salvation comes only through faith in Jesus Christ as each person recognizes their sinfulness and receives forgiveness and eternal life through Christ and His work on the cross.

parent(s) signature

(your signature indicates that you have read and affirm the statements regarding parent-child dedication)