

Child Dedications

While the dedication of children is not a Scriptural mandate, it is certainly in-line with Biblical teaching. Asking God's blessing upon a child is exemplified in Matthew 19:13-15, Luke 2:21-40 and other biblical passages.

The Purpose of a Child Dedication

It is an opportunity for parent(s) to make a public covenant with God, witnessed by the people of Bethel...The Church @ Franklin Mills, that the parent(s) will endeavor to faithfully train and guide the child in the way God desires (Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:1-4, etc.), and that the parent(s) will themselves purpose to live a godly life (Ephesians 5:21-33, etc.) before the child. It is also an opportunity for the congregation to commit itself to being supportive and encouraging of the parent(s) in the process, and for the pastor to pray publicly asking God's blessing upon the child as well as God's empowerment of the parent(s) to fulfill their obligations before Him.

The Requirements for a Child Dedication

1. An interview with a pastor must be completed prior to the dedication service.
2. Since the Child Dedication involves the parent(s) publicly seeking help from the congregation in the raising of their child, the parent(s) should regularly attend Bethel...The Church @ Franklin Mills

The Issue Of Godparents

For many centuries, a large number of churches have held to the tradition of naming "godparents". Many of our own people either have godparents or are themselves godparents. While we certainly respect this tradition, we also realize that the Bible nowhere requires that godparents be named. Therefore, in order to make the parent(s) responsibility very clear, if godparents are appointed, only the parents themselves will actually take part in the Child Dedication on stage with the pastor.

At Bethel, we believe that the Bible teaches that each of us must personally make a decision to follow Jesus Christ. Each of us, on our own, must come to the place where we can acknowledge the following:

- That we are a sinner separated from God because of our sin – Romans 3:23
- That Jesus came to die on the cross so that our sins could be forgiven. He is waiting for each of us to ask Him to come into our lives and to forgive our sins – John 3:16

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- That when we do ask Jesus to forgive our sins and to be a part of our lives, He promises to walk through life with us and to take us to heaven when we die – John 14:1-3

A child dedication does nothing to remove this same responsibility from the child. Ultimately, when a child is capable, he/she must still choose to ask Jesus to forgive their sins and to lead them through life. This being true, what then is the purpose of a Child Dedication? It is a commitment on the part of the parent(s) as well as a commitment on the part of the church.

Since raising children in today's world is not easy, the people of Bethel are making a commitment to the parent(s) and child to pray for them and to encourage them.

The parent(s) are making a commitment to love God, to raise the child the way that God wants, and to raise the child to love God. For this to happen, the parent(s) need to be living out the following before a Child Dedication will be performed:

1. God's plan for the family is to have children raised in a home where the parents are committed to each other through marriage. Because of this, if the parents of the child being dedicated are not now married, please indicate this on the form and explain your current situation. This can be discussed further when you meet with one of the pastors.
2. God's plan for each of us is to be part of a church where we worship, learn and interact with others. Because of this, the parent(s) need to make a commitment to regularly attend Bethel and to bring the child with them. The parent(s) must attend Bethel for six (6) months before a Child Dedication will be performed.
3. God's plan for the family is to have the parent(s) be the example of God's love in the life of the child. For this to happen, the parent(s) need to be committed to living life God's way. Because of this, the parent(s) must be committed and living out at home what they are learning at Bethel.

When you are faithfully committed to and living out the commitments listed above, Bethel will be happy to perform a Child Dedication for you and your child. When you are ready for this, please complete the Child Dedication Form online or get one while at Church and turn it in to the Information Center.

If you have any questions about any of this, please call the church office.