

PARKCHURCH

CHILD DEDICATION

What is the purpose of child dedication?

We believe that child dedication is an opportunity for us to celebrate the grace and goodness of God as the creator of all things. Conception and birth are gifts from God that he alone controls.

We believe that this allows us to stand with families as they dedicate themselves as parents. They are publicly saying that they realize that their children are gifts from God that he has entrusted to their care. Parents are also vowing to treasure Jesus as they parent their children and to raise them in a community of faith that believes and proclaims the gospel.

Deuteronomy 6 gives us instructions on the way we are to raise our children: *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."* (Deut 6:4-9 ESV)

Child dedication is also a celebration and commitment of our covenant community. We believe that God has designed us for relationships and he has created the church to be the context where we covenant together in an effort to live out the implications of the gospel. One of the most beautiful reasons for child dedication is that it gives us a chance to look to the gospel. In children we see total dependence on their parents for life. We are just as fragile and dependent on God. Our deepest need is for him to adopt us as sons and daughters through the work of Jesus and to sustain us with eternal life. Dedication is a time for us to proclaim those truths to our community – both to those who are a part of the church and those visiting.

How is dedication different from infant baptism?

Dedication is neither a religious ritual nor is it a substitute for baptism. Baptism is a symbol of conversion, a celebration of someone placing their trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. It reminds us of the power in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. While these realities impact everything we do at Park Church, that symbolism is not being portrayed in a child's dedication.

Is there saving power in dedicating a child?

Dedication does not make a child right with God nor is it a promise that they will be right with God at a later date. There is nothing magical about child dedication that earns righteousness for the child or gets them closer to God. The Bible is abundantly clear that all are born separated from God and it is only through faith in the work of Jesus on the Cross that we are reconciled to him. Salvation only comes when we put our trust in Jesus and make him our treasure.

(Above material adapted from Redeemer Fellowship KS)