



CHILD DEDICATION AT OCEANSIDE

PURPOSE & BIBLICAL PRECEDENT

What a special occasion and act you are considering! Child dedication is an important and biblical step in the raising of a child.

Perhaps the most important declaration being made at a dedication is this: This child is not my own, but belongs to God. Therefore, we will entrust them to the Lord and free them to follow God wherever that may take them.

The concept of child/baby dedication is of course found in the Bible, in both testaments, and in the life of Jesus himself:

Luke 2:22: When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took [Jesus] to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord

In **1 Samuel 1**, we learn of the woman Hannah who prays for a child and the Lord hears her prayer and grants her a son. She says in v. 22 that she will “present him before the Lord.”

And so when he was still young, she brought him to the priest and said: ²⁷ I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. ²⁸ So now I give him to the Lord”

Both of these stories briefly illustrate the 3 different elements of child dedication:

1. The Parents dedication to the Lord and to the child (to give them up and raise them in the way of the Lord)

- Mary and Joseph “took Jesus to Jerusalem” in a physical act of handing him over as parents, and Hannah said “now I give him to the Lord”

2. Church response (community of faith)

- The parents don’t do the act themselves in the privacy of their homes; rather, like adult baptism, this is a public act received and validated by the community of faith

3. The Child Dedication to the Lord through Anointing and Prayer

- both stories use the language of “present him to/before the Lord”
- We aren’t told exactly what the dedication ceremony entailed in either of these stories, but there was some formal act of dedication which likely included words said, prayers, and some physical outward act to represent the inward truth.

- In Exodus 30:30-31 God says, "Anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate [dedicate] them so they may serve me as priests. Say to the Israelites, 'This is to be my sacred anointing oil for the generations to come.'" Therefore, oil is:
 - symbolic of dedication (priests in OT; cf. priesthood of all believers in the NT)
 - A type/metaphor of the giving of the Holy Spirit, of favor, or commission

ELEMENTS OF THE DEDICATION SERVICE

Explanation of Dedication

The Parents Dedication (parents are called up)

You will be asked to make commitments and promises before God and the congregation:

1. So first, do you recognize that **[Name]** is a gift from God to you, to us, and to the world?
2. In that case, do you present **[Name]** to the Lord today in dedication?
3. Do you pledge to bring up **[Name]** in a Christian home, looking to God for wisdom, strength, and love?
4. Lastly, as **[Name]** grows up will you endeavour to lead **him/her** to trust Jesus as **his/her** own Lord and Saviour?

Church Response

1. Congregation, will you prayerfully support **[Parents]** in the raising of **[Name]** and thereby help them to keep their commitments made today?
2. Will you seek to follow Christ wholeheartedly in order to lead **[Name]** by example?
3. Will you passionately support the ministries of this church that aim to disciple children?

Dedication Through Anointing and Prayer (other family members join)

- What family members should be recognized?
- Any meaningful stories or significant meaning to the name?

The child will be anointed with oil in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as a sign of dedication and consecration to God

[Pastor will hold child for dedication prayer]