

BABY DEDICATION PROCESS

HIGHPOINT CHURCH

It's always exciting when a new child enters a family. There is no other season of life when a parent experiences excitement and fear all at the same time. Many parents desire to participate in a public ceremony that acknowledges their commitment as Christian parents and recognizes their need for God's help and guidance. Some Christian denominations baptize children while others dedicate them.

There are two reasons we do not baptize infants and young children at Highpoint Church. The first is that nowhere in the Bible do we find one example of infants and children being baptized. The second reason is that water baptism is an outward expression of an inward experience. The person being baptized is making a public confession of their faith that Christ has died for their sins and they have made a conscious decision to follow His teachings. While at Highpoint we do not set an age limit on when a person can be baptized, it is typically done after childhood when a person understands what salvation is and has made his/her own decision to follow Christ. In other words, baptism is a personal choice one makes with the full understanding of what they are doing and not the choice of others.

However, we do find several examples in the Bible of parents bringing their children to be prayed over and dedicated to the Lord by spiritual leadership. At Highpoint we call this a baby dedication.

1. WHAT IS A BABY DEDICATION?

A baby dedication is a ceremony in which believing parent(s)—and sometimes entire families— make a commitment before the Lord to submit a child to God's will and to raise that child according to God's Word and principles.

By dedicating a child Christian parents are making a commitment to God to do everything within their power to raise that child in a godly way until they can make a decision on their own to follow God. Parents who make this commitment are instructed to raise the child in accordance with God's standards. Some of the responsibilities include:

- **Leadership:** Teaching, training, praying and setting standards for their child in accordance with God's Word.
- **Modeling:** Demonstrating an example of godliness, as well as modeling grace and forgiveness in their lives and home.
- **Community:** Participating in a community of faith to expose their child to community worship, discipleship, Christian service and community outreach.
- **Dependence:** To seek God's strength, grace and wisdom in raising a child.

2. ARE BABY DEDICATIONS BIBLICAL?

Yes, baby dedications have a Biblical precedent. The Bible teaches us that children are a gift from God saying, "Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him" (Psalm 127:3 - NLT). As Christian parents we are called to recognize that children belong first and foremost to God. God has given us the awesome responsibility of caring for this gift, as well as the wonderful privilege of enjoying them. Deuteronomy 6:4-7 commands parents to love God and to accept their responsibility to provide spiritual environment for their children to grow and develop in their own faith. We are told in 1 Samuel 1 that Hannah presented her son Samuel to the Lord. In Luke 2:22 we read that Mary and Joseph brought their baby Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem in order to present him before the Lord. Baby dedications are a modern way for Christian parents to make the same expression of faith.

3. WHAT HAPPENS DURING A BABY DEDICATION?

Dedications are scheduled during one of Highpoint's Sunday morning worship service and usually last about 5 minutes. Each dedication consists of the following:

- *Pre-Service Meeting:* The Early Childhood Director will meet the parent (s) before service to brief them about how the dedication will be introduced and any logistics involved.
- *Introduction:* Pastor Caleb will introduce the family and ask them to join him on the platform while making a brief statement about the purpose of baby dedications.
- *Pastoral Encouragement:* Pastor Caleb will give the parent(s) a brief word of encouragement concerning how to raise their child in a Christ-centered home.
- *Pastoral Prayer:* Pastor will pray a prayer of blessing upon them.
- *Presentation:* After the prayer Pastor will present the child to the church and the Early Childhood Director will present the parent(s) with a gift to commemorate this special day.
- *Conclusion:* The family will exit the stage while the service transitions into the next segment.

4. HOW DOES A PARENT SCHEDULE A BABY DEDICATION?

Dedications are scheduled during the Sunday morning worship services at a time determined by the Pastor and Church Staff. This depends on the amount of interest and may happen quarterly. The process begins by:

- *Parent Request:* Interested parents should email Highpoint's Early Childhood Director expressing their interest. Unfortunately, we can only entertain requests by the parent(s) and not extended family.
- *Coordination:* Highpoint's Early Childhood Director will respond with information about the next upcoming date that has been scheduled and confirm parent(s) availability on this date.
- *Scheduling:* Highpoint's Early Childhood Director will then confirm the day with the parent(s) and schedule the baby dedication.