

## What Is Parent and Child Dedication?

Element Church believes children are a gift from God and celebrates parents who choose to raise their kids with Godly principles. Our Parent & Child Dedication is a time of public and personal commitment where parents make a covenant to teach their kids about building a relationship with Jesus Christ. The commitment implies the parents own belief in the Bible as a standard of living, and the Church as a community of faith in which your child can experience Christian living.

Parents can't decide their child's salvation for them. Everyone must make their own decision to have a personal relationship with Christ. When children are old enough to understand what Jesus did for them by dying on the Cross for their sins, and that He loves them so much, **then** they are ready to decide to ask Him to be their Savior! Before this, parents need to lay a foundation through teaching and example that will help children make that decision for themselves at the right time.

It's our responsibility as moms and dads, regardless of the individual situation, to create a Christ-centered, healthy, and growing environment for our kids.

## Is Parent and Child Dedication in the Bible?

The scriptural root of child dedication is found in **1 Samuel 1:27-28** (NASB), 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 prayed these words: *"For this boy I prayed, and the Lord has given me my petition which I asked of Him. So, I have also dedicated him to the Lord; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the Lord."* A New Testament example is in **Luke 2**. 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.

## Parent and Child Dedication is really about the Parents

As parents, nothing is more important than living a life that shows your child that their heavenly father created them, loves them, and wants a personal relationship with them. To set a good foundation for our kids we must listen to Jesus' command knowing that most of what our kids learn from us is through their everyday observation of how we live. Your children have a choice, yet your model will always be there for them and will have an impact and be the best model in their lives. The best thing you can do to invest in your child's future is to invest in your personal relationship with Jesus. The writings of Moses, found in **Deuteronomy 6:5-9**, describes 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." Parent and Child dedication will help you mark this step as you make that commitment to pray for your child, love your child and guide your child toward a personal relationship with Christ.

## What about baptism? Does Element baptize infants?

Parent and Child Dedication is not a baptism service. Scripture provides evidence that baptism follows an individual's decision to trust Jesus alone for salvation (Acts 2:41, 8:12, and 10:47-48). Baptism doesn't make you a believer, it shows that you are a believer! In the Bible, we find parents bringing their children to Jesus. He held them, prayed for them, and told us to welcome them. But He did not baptize them, and He did not tell anyone else to baptize them. Element Church believes baptism is for those who have made a personal decision to trust Jesus alone for their salvation, once they have the maturity and ability to understand what that means.

Dedication is not a sacrament; and like baptism, dedication does not impart 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 Him and His work on the cross. So, following Biblical example, rather than baptizing infants, Element Church encourages Christian parents to dedicate their children. This is a ceremony in which parents call upon God's blessing for their child and publicly commit to raise him or her in accordance with Scripture.

## Expectation of Parent(s)

While Element Church isn't made up of perfect people because we're all sinners who've been saved by the grace of God, the Bible still instructs us to live lives worthy of the privilege we've received as God's redeemed people. Followers of Jesus will find that God's ways **OFTEN** conflict with cultural values and morals. We're instructed to avoid lifestyle choices that are spiritually defiling or that would damage our individual reputation as followers of Christ. This is what the Bible says in Ephesians 5:

"Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore, do not be partners with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light."

- At least one or both of the parents have made a commitment to having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. ***We recognize that there are many families in which only one parent has come to faith and the spouse that is not yet a believer would like to participate – that is okay.***
- Parent(s) are regular attenders of Element’s weekend services and following Christ in their own life.
- Parent(s) align with Element’s beliefs, purpose, and values.
- Parent(s) commit to lead by example in matters of faith and conduct.
- Parent(s) have made the choice to abide by Biblical guidelines about God’s will regarding their personal purity. This includes not living together with a partner outside of a commitment in marriage. The Bible teaches that any sexual lifestyle outside of marriage between a husband and a wife, including pre-marital sexual relations as well as any other forms of sexual expression, does not fall in line with the moral will of God for our lives. Biblically, it’s damaging to our testimony and message as followers of Christ to encourage a couple to dedicate their child when they are openly living in a manner that is inconsistent with God’s clear instruction. ***We encourage unmarried couples who are living together, and want to dedicate their child, to alter their situation by marrying their partner, or by changing their living arrangement in obedience to the Lord before dedication.***

## **FAQ’S:**

### **Does Element Church need to be my church home in order to have my child dedicated?**

We encourage parents to make sure they are calling Element their home church if they choose to dedicate their child, even if you are not a member. The reason for this is that in dedicating your child to God, you are stating that you are willing to partner with God and your local church family 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 fully participate in their partnership with the church.

### **At what age can a child take part in a dedication service?**

While Element Church does not have a set age requirement for child dedication, the average age for a child to be dedicated is under 3 years of age. We have many families that dedicate children much older than that, usually because the family has recently made the commitment to follow Christ.

### **Can a single parent participate in a child dedication service?**

Yes! Child dedication signifies the commitment of parents (including single parents) to do their best to raise their child to be a follower of Jesus 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, Element Church is committed to supporting single parents in providing a Christian foundation for their child’s upbringing. In the case of a single parent, that parents needs to be aligned with the commitments to purity that are expected of a parent leading their child to follow Christ.

### **Can parent(s) assign godparents?**

Although the term “godparent” is not used at Element Church, we do welcome parents to invite friends and family members committed to supporting them. The presence of these significant adults symbolizes their commitment to play a supportive role in the child’s spiritual development. During the ceremony only the parents and child are invited to be on the platform, but parents are encouraged to save seats for family and friends.

### **What should I expect during the 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. The Church family will also be witnesses of your commitment, as well as committing themselves to help be a supportive community in which your child can be raised.

### **What should we wear on the day of dedication?**

Parents and children are welcome to wear whatever makes you feel most comfortable. You will briefly be on the platform, so please choose appropriate attire.

***If you or your family has questions about any of the above statements, feel free to contact our Kids Pastor at [aaronb@elementchurch.com](mailto:aaronb@elementchurch.com).***