



Baby | Child Dedication

What Does the Bible Say?

People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

-Mark 10:13-16

The language in this scripture suggests that it was both the fathers and mothers who brought these little ones to Jesus. The culture in those days paid little attention to children, it's likely that this is why they were initially shoved aside by those around Jesus. In this case, Jesus expresses frustration with the chiding given the children. He actually begins to ask that the children be brought to Him. Obviously, children were very important to Jesus Christ.

To show his care for children, he touched them and held them and blessed them. This event was so significant that three or four of Jesus' biographers recorded this event in their writings. (Remember bath water was at a premium and diapers and washing machines were not available at that time. Children would often be dirty in those days and yet Jesus held them and loved them.) The child-like (not childish) qualities exhibited by these little ones are to be imitated. When we bless these children before the church family, this reminds us of the qualities we should exhibit in our own walks with God (e.g. trusting, open, receptive, friendly, etc.).

And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.

-Matthew 18:3-5

An Event for Parents, too

The Child Dedication event is not only a dedication of the children to the Lord, but a time of parents dedicating themselves to raise their children in a home that honors God. In this act parents are promising to create a home in which the Bible is held in high regard and the Christian faith is a topic that often surfaces in the family conversations. They are pledging to follow the directions of Paul to "bring your children up in the training and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4)



Children Will Later Decide

As a result, these children will hopefully come to understand what it means to trust in Christ by faith (i.e. to become a Christian). It will certainly be the goal and desire of all believing parents to see their children come to saving faith in Christ. This can happen as soon as the child is able to comprehend his sinfulness and understand his or her need to invite Jesus Christ to be Lord of their young life.

As a child grows and is able to understand their need to be “born again” the child may then want to consider believer’s baptism. Baptism is described in several scriptures (Acts 8:12, 34-40, Matthew 3:11-17). Water baptism merely illustrates how their sins have been erased by the blood of Christ. This baptism does not make them a Christian, but rather demonstrates that they are a Christian. It is a testimony to others that they have decided to follow Christ. Salvation is necessary before baptism. As a result, it is not appropriate to baptize small children who are not yet capable of understanding their need for Christ’s forgiveness.

So How Do We Do This?

In the Evangelical Free Church we encourage parents to dedicate their children to the Lord. Periodically, we invite parents to bring their infants and toddlers before the church family in a worship service. Each child is prayed for. The parents are also prayed for as they embark on this task of raising their children. The church family then responds by saying that they will support and assist the parents in this task. A keepsake certificate is given to the parents commemorating this promise that they have made.

What Next?

If you are interested in dedicating your child to the Lord, please contact Linda Mulbach at the church office (237-5968 or linda@kefc.org). We schedule baby / child dedications on the 2nd Sunday of each month