

# **Eternal Church**

## **Child Dedication Guidelines & Conditions**

Our Child Dedication service is a public declaration of the parent or parents before God and man acknowledging with gratitude that the child is a gift from God. Recognizing that as parents you need God's wisdom and help in raising your child and with His help you will do your best to set the example for this child to follow in the way of the LORD.

### **THE ROOT**

Child Dedication at Eternal Church is a family time when parents publicly commit themselves to abiding by biblical principles and raising their children according to God's standards. Not only are we dedicating your child to God, but you are also dedicating yourselves as parents to God.

### **ENVIRONMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

You are committing yourselves to maintaining a Christian home in which Christ is honored and the Word of God is held in reverence. Christian parents are to do all they can to "set apart" their child to God until that child can make his or her own choice regarding a relationship with Jesus Christ.

The responsibilities God has entrusted to Christian parents include continuously praying for their children (Job 1:5), instructing them in the way of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6), setting a Godly example (Proverbs 20:7), and disciplining them as the Lord would discipline us (Proverbs 29:15,17; 13:24). These responsibilities can only be fulfilled in Christ's strength (Philippians 4:13).

### **CONDITIONS**

Only a couple committed to Christ and married (a man and a woman) or a Single Parent committed to Christ and not living with someone may participate in the ceremony.

Parents who have not placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord will be unable to submit their children to God's will and His ways, because they themselves do not know the ways of the Lord. As a result, we must decline any requests to involve an unbelieving parent in the dedication of a child.

We recognize that not every parent is committed to living a Christ-centered lifestyle. However, the Pastoral staff at Eternal will continue to ensure that every child has access to all programs and ministry opportunities provided by the church. We can also commit to pray for your child and to continue to serve your family in every way possible.

A believing parent may dedicate a child independently of an unbelieving spouse.

Single parents who dedicate their children may not have boyfriends or girlfriends present with them on the platform.

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### **WHY SHOULD I DEDICATE MY CHILD?**

The Bible provides an example for us in that Mary and Joseph took baby Jesus to the temple to be dedicated to God. As followers of Christ, we also should want to make the public declaration to our family, and our church. It is invaluable to be able to tell your children as they are growing up that they belong to Jesus and that you are only stewarding what has God has given to you.

### **WHERE IN THE SCRIPTURE DOES IT SAY TO DEDICATE YOUR CHILD?**

Scripture does not mention anything about dedication of children; however, Hannah dedicated her son Samuel to the Lord (1 Samuel 1:27, 28).

Jesus was dedicated to the Lord as a baby (Luke 2:22) and baptized as an adult (Matthew 3:13-17).

In Mark 10:11-13 we read: “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 hand on them and blessed them.” It is primarily from this passage of Scripture that we model our service of dedication and present a child to the Lord.

### **HOW OLD SHOULD THE CHILD BE?**

While there is no set age for a child to be presented to the Lord, children are generally presented within the first year or two of their life.

### **DO I HAVE TO BE MEMBER AT ETERNAL IN ORDER TO DEDICATE MY CHILD?**

You do not have to be a member at Eternal to participate. We do encourage parents to make sure they are calling Eternal their church home. Why? Because this is a communal moment. You are making declarations to the church body that they, in return, will make with you. We are partnering together to support your stewardship of the child you desire to dedicate to God. So, it would be wise to agree with the vision and beliefs of Eternal before moving forward.

## **CAN I AS A GRANDPARENT DEDICATE MY GRANDCHILD?**

Yes, if you have full custody and the child lives with you. The person making a public vow should be the child's caretaker who is responsible for the upbringing of the child.

## **WHAT ABOUT GODPARENTS?**

There is nothing mentioned in the Bible about Godparents. Parents themselves have the responsibility to raise up their children in the things of the Lord. Some parents may like to call witnesses to confirm their commitment.

These may be relatives or loved ones who know the parents well and who themselves are Christians and faithful to the Lord. While godparents are welcome to attend the ceremony, they will not stand with the parents. There is just not sufficient space to accommodate everyone's godparents on the stage or around the altar area.

## **WHAT IF I AM A BELIEVER BUT MY SPOUSE IS NOT?**

If only one parent is a believer, the dedication of the child can be done if the unbelieving parent has given permission.

## **WHAT IF I AM NOT MARRIED BUT I LIVE WITH THE CHILD'S FATHER/MOTHER/FRIEND?**

Dedication does nothing for the child; it is actually a declaration (vow) where the parents dedicate themselves to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is very difficult to make such a declaration when living in opposition to the Word of God. We are very supportive of parents and do encourage them to make their union legal and then proceed with the Child Dedication.

## **WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AFTER I DEDICATE MY CHILD?**

Dedication is a pledge to cultivate a spiritual atmosphere in the home. One must never underestimate the incredible influence a parent has on the faith of their children. Infant dedication expresses the intention and faith of the parents to do everything they can to lead their child to salvation. It is a public pledge to circle the child with a positive environment that will nurture the child's faith in God. Scripture tells us that we are to train a child in the way he should go (Proverbs 22:6). This includes meeting together regularly as Christians to spur one another onto love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:23-24). Dedication of children to God is a promise to model a Christian lifestyle to the children while worshipping with a church family regularly.

## **WHY DO I NEED TO MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES?**

Dedicating a child to the Lord is equally a dedication of a parent's life, hope and trust to the Lord as well. To do one without the other would not be in line with scripture or beneficial for the child. Upon reviewing the guidelines & conditions for child dedication at Eternal, if you have realized that you cannot move forward in this process with integrity, you serve your child well to stop and reflect on why you don't meet the conditions and what the Lord might be showing you about His loving Word and how it aligns our lives towards godly living and godly leading of our children.

The pastors at Eternal Church would love to have a conversation with you about this. The Lord desires for your own life to be dedicated to Him just as much as the life of your child. Consider reaching out to one of our pastors to discuss what the Lord might be showing you through this process. You can reach the pastors by emailing: [office@eternalchurch.net](mailto:office@eternalchurch.net)

## **IF I MEET THE GUIDELINES, WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO DEDICATE MY CHILD?**

The next step in dedicating your child is to register for the next Child Dedication Workshop & Ceremony. The Child Dedication Workshop is a one-night gathering of parents and pastors to look at what scripture says about raising up children in the Truth of God's Word and in biblical Community with other believers. These workshops take place on Wednesday evenings, followed by a Dedication Ceremony the next Sunday morning.

Because of the spiritual significance of dedicating your child, these workshops are required for both parents (if applicable.) Childcare is available for children nursery - 5th grade in partnership with Greenhouse, a children's discipleship ministry on Wednesday nights at Eternal.

Visit [eternalchurch.net](http://eternalchurch.net) or check out the "events" tab in the church app. If there is not an upcoming child dedication workshop, please contact the church office ([office@eternalchurch.net](mailto:office@eternalchurch.net)) to inquire about the next available date.

## **CHECKLIST:**

- Do I meet and agree with all the guidelines and conditions?
- Have I registered on the church website to be included in the dedication service and workshop?
- Have I received a confirmation from Eternal Church?