



Child Dedication at Crossroads Church

Child dedication is the prayerful act of setting a child apart toward the purposes of God for his or her life. The act reflects *the intended efforts of the parents* to love and lead their children in the direction of knowing and following God.

Within the simplicity of this idea, the act of child dedication is, for some, an area of confusion. There are several examples of child dedication in the Bible, the most central one being that of Jesus in Luke 2:22. The confusion is that, though many may call it *child dedication*, truthfully it is *an act of intention of the parents* to embrace the opportunity God has given them to raise their child in a trajectory to love God and follow Him as their offspring grows from child to adulthood. Furthermore, there is confusion in child dedication because it is sometimes thought of in the context of infant baptism, an activity practiced in other denominations of Christianity. Within such churches, there is the belief that the faith of the parents carries into the life of their child, in some ways superseding their own need or ability of faith. Most Bible-believing churches, Crossroads Church included, acknowledge that the ultimate decision to respond in faith to Jesus and follow Him rests in each person individually. Parents can “guide” their child, but the decision of faith and obedience ultimately rests within each individual in his or her own time, or rather, in God’s timing.

What does Child Dedication mean? Truthfully, it would be easiest to change our language and think of Child Dedication as Parent Dedication. This is actually more biblical and more in line with what is actually taking place. Intentional and loving spiritual parenting is a practice illustrated many times in the Scriptures. Below are a few key verses of this intentionality of spiritual care in parenting.

- Proverbs 22:6
- Deuteronomy 6:5-7
- Ephesians 6:4

What does Child Dedication/Parent Dedication look like at Crossroads? As a church we believe that spiritual parenting rests within the love and intention of the parents. The fruit of their desire rests within the vision and practices that the parents embrace, and ultimately how God uses their influence in the life of their child. We believe that parents who value and live in biblical community, and model a love for God and a lifestyle of joyful pursuit of God have the greatest possibility of their child following suit. Within this, the church serves as support to the family in helping all families walk in biblical living. We believe that the church, the collection of followers of Jesus walking life together, have the ability to positively model Godward living and humble, daily, response to God’s grace. This is best seen in Community Groups, rather than weekend services, because of the proximity of “life-on-life” within Community Groups. Because of this, we encourage Child Dedications/Parent Dedication to be a function of and within the life of Community Groups. We believe this models the beautiful intimacy and intention of such a moment, and it is held within the very relationships that God will likely use as an influence and encouragement to both the children and the parents.

A simple outline for Child Dedication/Parent Dedication in the context of a Community Group.

Parent Sharing

Parents share their desire/intentions.

Sharing of a key verse, or a passage of Scripture they believe God has given them for their child.

Vow of parents and a vow of the group

Of the parents:

We, the parents of _____, chosen by God for this child, commit before God and these people to strive to bring them up in the nurture and knowledge of the Lord. We seek to instruct them in the teachings of the Bible using the environments of home and church. We will strive to teach them the way of holy living and with prayerful dependence upon God, modeling both intentional obedience to God, and appreciation for His grace and love as we parent within our human imperfections. It is our ultimate desire to lead them to the point where they have the opportunity to make a personal decision to follow Jesus.

Of the group:

We will strive, through the community of this church, to provide these parents with the support, encouragement, and spiritual direction they need to fulfill the vow they are making before God this day. To the best of your ability, we will hold firmly to the truth of Scripture in our living to be an example of Christ to this family and their children.

Prayer

A time of open group prayer for the parents and their child.