

Child Dedication or Parent Commissioning?

May 9, 2019

by Ben Purves

Would you like to bring your newborn before our church family for child dedication? We invite you to read and learn more about this tradition and our practice at Occoquan Bible Church.

What is Child Dedication?

Child dedication is a church tradition wherein parents bring their newborn children before the church to celebrate God's gift of life, for prayer, and to dedicate their children to the Lord. However, this tradition is not found or prescribed in the Bible. More often than not, child dedication is a tradition of Baptist churches in contrast to infant baptism (as we practice believer's baptism).

To dedicate one's child to the Lord is to set apart a child to the Lord. If you think of biblical examples, you might think of the way in which Hannah gave her son Samuel to serve the Lord (1 Sam 1), or the Old Covenant sacrificial system and the sacrifices that would be offered after a child was born (Lev 12, Lk 2). But these are not present applications for us as we live in the New Covenant. In this way, the term child dedication can become confusing or misleading. In addition, we want to be clear that child dedication does not result in a child's salvation, and it does not create repentance and faith in our children's hearts. Salvation is a gift of God's grace and not a fruit of child dedication. Along the same lines, we do not believe that our children will belong to God any more after child dedication than they already belonged to Him before. Truly, all things belong to Him (Ps 50).

Celebration and Prayer

Let us clarify our intent. God is the Author of Life, and we rejoice to see the Lord's grace as He adds children to our families! It is good for our church family to celebrate and give thanks together, for children are a gift from the Lord (Ps 127-128). We are glad to share in one another's joy (Lk 1:58; 1 Cor 12:26). Because of this, we love to introduce our little ones to our church family, and pray for our new parents and the futures of their children. This is a special moment in the discipleship of our families. But instead of a child dedication, it's more of a parent commissioning. We pray for and commission our parents, that they would be faithful to raise their children up in the Lord. And we pray for our little ones, that they would grow up to love and trust our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Next Parent Commissioning

OBC will be offering our next Parent Commissioning on Sunday, June 2nd during Great Commission Prayer. (Great Commission Prayer is a special time of prayer with our church family during the 10:00am Sunday school hour on the first Sunday of each month). At this time we will invite you, your spouse, and your child up before the congregation to introduce your child and to pray for you and your family. Parent Commissionings can also be arranged for future months during Great Commission Prayer.

Parenting 101

For those who would like to participate in "Parent Commissioning," OBC offers a one-hour Parenting 101 class. This is an opportunity for us to invest gospel truths in you and your family as we seek to raise our children up in the Lord. Parenting 101 will be held on Sunday, May 19, at 10:00am in Room 5 downstairs (across the hall from the restrooms), and it will be taught by Ron Comoglio.

RSVP for Parent Commissioning and Parenting 101

Please RSVP to the church office (admin@obc.org) if you would like to attend Parenting 101 (May 19) and participate in our next Parent Commissioning (June 2).