BABY DEDICATION INFORMATION

It's always exciting when a new child joins a family. No other stage of life brings about both excitement and fear for a parent at the same time. Many parents want to participate in a public ceremony that acknowledges their commitment as Christian parents and acknowledges their need for God's help and guidance. Some Christian denominations baptize children, while others dedicate them.

There are two reasons we do not baptize infants and young children at Pillar Church. The first is that nowhere in the Bible do we find one example of infants and children being baptized. The second reason is that water baptism is an outward expression of an inward experience. The person being baptized is making a public confession of their faith, acknowledging that Christ has died for their sins and that they have made a conscious decision to follow His teachings. While at Pillar Church, we do not set an age limit on when a person can be baptized; it is typically done after childhood, when a person understands what salvation is and has made his/her own decision to follow Christ. In other words, baptism is a personal choice made with a complete understanding of what one is doing, not a choice made by others.

However, we do find several examples in the Bible of parents bringing their children to be prayed over and dedicated to the Lord by spiritual leadership. At Pillar Church, we refer to this as a baby dedication.

What is a baby dedication?

A baby dedication is a ceremony in which believing parent(s)—and sometimes entire families—commit before the Lord to submit a child to God's will and to raise that child according to God's Word and principles.

By dedicating a child, Christian parents are committing to God to do everything within their power to raise that child in a godly way until they can decide on their own to follow God. Parents who make this commitment are instructed to raise the child in accordance with God's standards. Some of the responsibilities include:

- Leadership: Teaching, training, praying, and setting standards for their child in accordance with God's Word.

- **Modeling**: Demonstrating an example of godliness, as well as modeling grace and forgiveness in their lives and home.
- **Community**: Participating in a community of faith to expose their child to
- **community** worship, discipleship, Christian service, and community outreach.
- **Dependence**: To seek God's strength, grace, and wisdom in raising a child.

Are baby dedications Biblical?

Yes, baby dedications have a Biblical precedent. The Bible teaches us that children are a gift from God, saying, "*Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him*" (Psalm 127:3 – NLT). As Christian parents, we are called to recognize that children belong to God first and foremost. God has given us the tremendous responsibility of caring for this gift, as well as the incredible privilege of enjoying it. Deuteronomy 6:4-7 commands parents to love God and to accept their commitment to provide a spiritual environment for their children to grow and develop in their own faith. We are told in 1 Samuel 1 that Hannah presented her son Samuel to the Lord. In Luke 2:22 we read that Mary and Joseph brought their baby Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem in order to present him before the Lord. Baby dedications are a modern way for Christian parents to express their faith.

What happens during a baby dedication?

Dedications are scheduled during one of our Sunday morning worship services and usually last about 5-10 minutes. Each commitment consists of the following:

- **Pre-Service Meeting**: Pillar Kids Director will meet the parent (s) before service to brief them about how the commitment will be introduced and any logistics involved.
- **Introduction**: Pastor Alex will introduce the family and invite them to join him on the platform, making a brief statement about the purpose of baby dedications.
- **Pastoral Encouragement**: Pastor Alex will give the parent(s) a brief word of encouragement concerning how to raise their child in a Christ-centered home.
- **Pastoral Prayer**: Pastor(s) will then ask to hold the child (infants) or place his hand upon them (if older) while they pray a prayer of blessing upon them.
- **Presentation**: After the prayer, the Pastor will present the child to the church, and the Pillar Kids director will present the parent(s) with a dedication gift of a personalized bible for a child, stuffed toy, certificate and a few other items.

- **Conclusion**: The family will exit the stage while the service transitions into the next segment.

How does a parent schedule a baby dedication?

We offer baby dedications in two ways so families can choose what fits best.

1. **Church-Scheduled Dedication Sunday (*Preferred Method*)**
   A few times each year, during our Sunday morning worship service, we hold baby dedication ceremonies. These dates are set during our early planning stages and can be found on the baby dedication sign-up form. The form is available on our website, social media, or in announcements as the date(s) get closer. Keep in mind that multiple families may be dedicated on the same Sunday. The services will be more special and focused on the child and baby dedication. Space is limited, so please sign up early.

2. **Parent-Requested Date**
   If the posted dates don't work or your family will be in town on a different day, parents can request a specific Sunday. Parents should email our Pillar Kids Director (kids@pillarchurch.life) with three (3) possible Sundays that work for your family. Requests must be made by a parent or legal guardian (not extended family members). Our Pillar Kids Director will reply with a brief overview of baby dedications and bring your three dates to our next staff meeting to review the service calendar. We'll select the best-fit date from your options (or suggest an alternative) and confirm with you.

Thank you!

The Pillar Church Team