

Dedications

Ded-i-ca-tion 1: an act or rite of dedicating to a divine being or a sacred use
2: a devoting or setting aside for a particular purpose.
Excerpt from WEBSTER'S New Collegiate Dictionary, G. & C. Merriam Co., 1981.
Page 293.

The dedication prayer of service is one of the most ancient and basic responses of God's people. It is one of the most meaningful ways we have to recognize that which is the Lord's.

Often there are special persons or things which we want to publicly dedicate to the Lord. This section of the Minister's Manual discusses in some detail the **dedication of children**, and **church buildings**.

The Bible gives the examples of Samuel's dedication to God as a young boy (1 Samuel 1:21-28), of Israel's dedication to God by covenant, and of the dedication of "Solomon's temple." (2 Chron. 6:12-42). Jesus was taken to the temple at Jerusalem to be consecrated (dedicated) to God shortly after His birth. (Luke 2:22-25)

The value of the dedication service is rooted in the power of the spoken word of faith and the motives of the heart. Nothing in heaven or on earth can take away an individual's freedom of choice in spiritual matters. But our godly actions as spiritual kings and priests can powerfully influence the course of men and make way for God's will to be done in our lives.

Through Spirit-led prayer and Biblical dedication, we can powerfully affect the lives of our children and help ensure the proper use of institutions and possessions on the earth.

CHILD DEDICATION

The dedication of a child is an acknowledgment by parents that their child is a gift from God. It is a promise to raise the child for God's glory. By committing the child to Him, they establish their role as stewards of God's inheritance entrusted to their care.

Child dedications were customary in Biblical times. For example, Jesus was dedicated in the Temple. (Luke 2:22-35) During His ministry children were brought to Him for His blessing. (Mark 10:16)

The dedication service is not meant to impart salvation to a child. It is a sacred service that should accomplish at least four major things:

1. It should invoke by prayer and the spoken word of faith the written promises of God given for parents and their children. Some pastors have the parents choose a scripture for their child. During the dedication ceremony, the pastor reads the Scripture and prays it over the child.
2. These prayers and proclamations should specifically include God's promises for protection, blessing, and favor. Through dedication, we set God's Word in action on behalf of our children, and it never returns void without accomplishing its assigned task.
3. Through these prayers and proclamations, we mark our children with the seal of the Holy Ghost. We proclaim our children to be the "seed of righteousness" who are in the care of the Almighty and living in the home of kings and priests of the Most High God, For a spiritual precedent, see Hebrews 11:28. Concerning His "little ones", see Matthew 18:4-7. Each child has an angel of protection. (Matthew 18:10). As spiritual offspring of Abraham and heirs of his blessing (Gal. 3:29), we and our children are God's anointed

and are not to be touched. I1 Chron. 16:15-22). Concerning God's protection of your "tent" of household, see Psalm 91.

4. By spoken vow and heartfelt commitment, parents clearly commit to a pattern of godly prayer and instruction for their children. Throughout their child's life, even in difficult times, the parents can return to the words and prayers offered during the dedication service as a foundation of God's intention and blessing on their home and children.

These guidelines will help you plan an effective dedication service:

1. Plan the child's dedication service carefully, well ahead of the service date. Haphazard or careless ministry is a blight on the church.
2. Keep the service brief and powerful. The dedication service is but one part of the church service and it shouldn't take the place of worship to God and the preaching of the Word.
3. Seat parents and other participants at the front of the sanctuary before the church service begins.
4. Have the first and last names of the children clearly written out so that you pronounce them correctly.
5. Type and sign the dedication certificates beforehand and give them to the parents at the close of the ceremony.
6. Some churches give Bibles to the children. Complete the appropriate pages in these before the service.

Many parents never forget the vow made at the altar. This vow challenges the parents for life and is a constant reminder of their obligation to the child, to God, and to the Church. If there is more than one family with children to dedicate in any one service, it is best to minister to only one family at a time. It makes the time more personal and effective.

THE CHURCH BUILDING DEDICATION

After a church building is completed, we dedicate it to set it apart from common use, unto God, for the worship of God.

The service should consist of worship (and probably some statements from leaders who have had an active part in the church building), opening prayer, a sermon by the pastor or a special guest, and dedicatory prayer (it is encouraged to invite a representative of FCF to participate).

Remember that the sermon and the dedicatory prayer are the most important parts of the service. Don't stretch out the preliminaries at the expense of the most important elements of the service. Too often, it is time to dismiss the service before the speaker is introduced.

The dedication service for your church building should be a time to catch the vision for the future. Seek God and follow His direction to ensure an inspiring and anointed dedication service. Don't fall into the trap of drowning your people in endless praise of the past and praise of men.