Parent/Baby Dedication

This Policy consists of:

- The Significance of Your Parent/Baby Dedication
- The Requirements for Dedicating Yourself and your Baby

Children are both a gift and a responsibility given from God. They bless and enrich our lives beyond words, but they actually belong to God rather than to their parents. They are given to the parents for a short time for the purpose of imparting godly character and Christian virtues. As parents, God has appointed you to be the primary spiritual leaders of your child. We at The Bridge recognize and support you in this serious task of raising-up your child in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).

Every parent has the comfort of knowing that he or she is not alone in this task, but that God has given us the power through His Spirit, and the wisdom through His Word to be successful.

The Significance of Your Parent/Baby Dedication:

The purpose of the parent/baby dedication is simply to make a public commitment to this task. It is also a time for the church family to be reminded of its corporate responsibility to its children, and to pray for the parents.

It is important to note here that a baby dedication is not to be equated with infant baptism. We do not believe, nor do the Scriptures teach, that baptism or any other external ceremony gives a child a "head start" on salvation. The ceremony could more properly be called a "parent dedication." Scripture calls parents, especially fathers, to intentionally train their children <u>from an early age</u> to properly fear the Lord and obey His word;

> *"For He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should teach them to their children, that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments. (Psalm 78:5-7)*

A godly home life and Christ-like parents are the foundation upon which the child can later build. Timothy had this advantage:

> *"From childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"* (2 Tim. 3:15)

The Requirements for Dedicating Your Baby:

1) Because we believe commitment to the local church to be both biblical and also indispensable for a solid Christian home life, we require **at least one of the parents to be a member of The Bridge Bible Fellowship.** To become a member you must:
   a) Take & complete all of the five core classes, which meet on six successive Sunday mornings (offered quarterly).
      i. What we believe
      ii. Membership
      iii. Discipleship
      iv. Baptism
      v. Discover Your Spiritual Gifts: Part 1 & 2
      * For detailed class information please pick up a **Core Class Brochure** from the guest table in the Worship Center.
   b) Submit an **Application for Membership** to the Church Office which includes a personal testimony.
      i. Pick up a Membership Application online, in the Church Office or at the guest table in the Worship Center
      ii. Completed application is reviewed & approved by Pastor Paul & two Elders
      iii. Interview with an Elder
      iv. Application approved by the Elder Board.
      v. Participate in the next presentation of New Members in one of the Sunday Morning Services.
2) Each parent is required to read the first 13 chapters of *Shepherding a Child's Heart* by Tedd Tripp.
   a) Each parent that is a member of The Bridge is to complete the study questions provided:
      i. Pick up the questions at the Church Office or
      ii. Download them from our website www.TBBFChurch.org: go to the Children's Ministry page and find the file under "Resources."
   b) To obtain the book you can either:
      i. **Purchase book:** Mail in a check for $10 (made out to TBBF) or drop it off at our church office
      ii. **Borrow book:** Check it out at no cost from our Church Library located on the side of "C" building next to Burch Hall.
3) Because this is really a dedication of the parents to the godly upbringing of the child, it is necessary for the parents to be fully committed to this task. At the dedication you will be asked to respond to the following questions:
   a) "Do you acknowledge with gratitude and thanksgiving the goodness of God who has brought you the gift of this little child, and do you recognize the serious responsibility that He has given you to teach and train them from their earliest years to love and obey God?" _____
   b) "Do you now promise that, enabled by the Spirit and grace of God and guided by the Scriptures, you will bring up this child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and always regard this as your constant duty and sacred privilege?" _____
   c) "Do you promise that you will so order your home, your words, and your actions, that your child will at all times be surrounded with pure thoughts, holy living and a Christ-like example?" _____

Procedure

1. You indicate interest in dedicating yourself and your baby by turning in a completed **Parent/Baby Dedication Information Form.**

2. A member of our Children's Ministries Staff will follow up with a phone call to confirm information and they will ask about **membership,** if that is an issue.

3. Please read this form and answer the questions on the previous page.

4. You will be given a reading assignment, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* by Tedd Tripp and a set of worksheet questions. Copies of the book can either be purchased from the church office ($10) or checked-out at no cost from the Church Library and questions are available in the church office. You will be given a deadline for reading the book and handing in the worksheet.

   a) **Mother's Day** in May: deadline is three Sundays prior to Mother's Day
   b) **Father's Day** in June: deadline is three Sundays prior to Father's Day
   c) **Alternate Day in the Fall** (upon request): deadline is three weeks prior.
   Early Deadline Reason: So that we have plenty of time to review your answers to the reading assignment and meet with you for follow-up, if necessary.

5. Upon receiving the worksheet from the parents, we will review your answers.

6. We will contact you for counseling and follow-up, if necessary.

7. **Day of the Dedication:** we will let you know what time and which service we will do your dedication.