

Parent and Child Dedication

I. Intro

Tonight we get to celebrate Cornerstone's first ever Parent and Child Dedication. It's extra special because tonight's dedication is for Elijah John and his parents Jonathan and Monica.

Before the dedication, however, I'd like to explain the what exactly Parent and Child Dedication is as well as briefly describe the theological foundation that we affirm in Parent and Child Dedication.

So...

A. What is Parent and Child Dedication?

1. We are not declaring Elijah to be a Christian.
(This is not a baptism)
Both of these are a personal and voluntary decision that we hope and pray Elijah will make when he gets older.

Instead...

2. Parent and Child Dedication is about commitment.
 - a. Elijah: Elijah is being committed, entrusted to the LORD's care by his parents.
 - b. Parents: Jonathan and Monica are committing themselves to raise Elijah in the Lord.
 - c. Church: We are committing to praying and caring for both Elijah and his parents as they raise him in the Lord.

So, if Parent and Child dedication is about commitment, then what are we saying in a Parent and Child Dedication Ceremony?

B. Three foundations for Parent and Child Dedication:

First, we are affirming that...

1. Parents' most important responsibility is the spiritual care of their child.
 - a. We spend so much energy, time, and money making sure that our child has every academic, athletic, artistic, and social opportunity that we deem important.
 - b. However, we can easily forget that children are people made in God's image for the purpose of finding satisfaction and purpose in a relationship with God. Children are spiritual beings.

- d. A parents' greatest joy and responsibility is to care for their child's soul, to nurture them spiritually.
2. Discipling children is a joint effort between parents and the church.

There is a reason that we are doing this doing worship; the church is involved in this ceremony, just as the church is part of bringing up a child in the Lord

3. We give our children to God because God has given.
This is true in a couple senses:
- a. We recognize that children are a gift from God. We are not entitled to children. So, in dedicating a child to God we are recognizing that the child ultimately belongs to God anyway.
 - b. You see, God has a son. And we believe that God gave him for us to save us from our own sin and rebellion against him. If God has not withheld from us his own son, then we can trust that he will withhold no good thing from us or from our child. So, we can entrust our children to this God with great joy.

I would now like to invite Elijah's family up to the front.

II. Presentation of Elijah John

Here we have Elijah John and his parents Jonathan and Monica.

A. Meaning of Names

- 1. Elijah: Yahweh is my God
- 2. John: Yahweh shows favor/Yahweh gives grace

B. Biblical Characters: As we look at Elijah and John the Baptist in the Bible, we see that both were prophets who called God's people back to exclusive devotion to him and who suffered tremendously for their faithfulness to speak truth, Elijah at the hands of Ahab and Jezebel and John at the hands of King Herod.

C. May Elijah John grow to become a man who worships Yahweh alone as his God; may he know God's favor and grace; may he speak God's truth faithfully and bear suffering patiently for Christ's sake.

II. Parent Commitments

- A. Will you entrust Elijah to God — to his providential plan and care?
- B. Will you teach the gospel to Elijah and pray regularly for him to believe in Christ?
- C. Will you, with the help of this church community, instruct Elijah by word and example in the truth of God's Word?

With God's help we will.

As a sign of this commitment, I ask both of you to sign this certificate of dedication.

IV. Congregational Commitments

Now, church, I ask you to rise and I will ask you some questions as well. Please don't respond immediately, I will lead us in a response at the very end.

- A. Do you, the people of the Lord, promise to receive Elijah in love, pray for him, help instruct him in the faith, and encourage and sustain him in this fellowship of believers?
- B. Do you promise to support, encourage, and pray for Jonathan and Monica as they seek to raise up Elijah in the training and instruction of the Lord?
- C. If so, please read the following:
With joy and thanksgiving, as Christ's church,
with God's help, we promise to love, encourage, and support you
as you follow Christ and raise Elijah in the faith.

Thank you. You may be seated. I'd like to invite Bernie up to pray for the family.

IV. Gift

Before Bernie prays, I'd like to give a gift to Elijah from the Cornerstone children's ministry. This is a Bible for Elijah that is for a few years in the future. This is a Bible that is meant to help Elijah transition from a story Bible to the full Bible when gets older and is able to read. Our prayer is that you will read to Elijah from this Bible and that he will eventually read it himself and that he will meet God in these pages.

V. Prayer (Bernie)