

# CHILD DEDICATION

## Morning Star Fellowship

**What is Morning Star Fellowship's position concerning the baptism of children, their security in the Kingdom, and the practice of dedicating them to the Lord?** (Taken from the Assemblies of God position papers on Infant Baptism, Age of Accountability, Dedication of Children) According to the Bible, everyone (adult or child) who recognizes his or her need of a Savior and then repents and believes in Christ should be baptized (Acts 2:38,41; 8:36-38). But in the Scripture there is no record of infants or very young children being baptized. This is because they are not yet able to understand the need of a Savior. Yet God places a high priority on children. When asked who is the greatest in the kingdom of God, Jesus responded, "Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). God's love for children is also shown in the Old Testament. In Leviticus the Lord specifically prohibited the people of Israel from offering their children as a sacrifice to the pagan god, Molech (Leviticus 20:1-5). It seems fair to conclude that if God forbade children from being sacrificed, He would not order those same children to be placed in the eternal fire of hell. From these Scriptures we believe that children are loved by God, and until they come to an age of understanding (some call it "the age of accountability"), they have a place in the kingdom of God. This means that should a child die before developing to a point where the knowledge of Christ can be understood and applied through forgiveness, the child would inherit eternal life in heaven as an heir of God's kingdom.

In Luke 2 we see the parents of the baby Jesus taking Him to the temple "to present Him to the Lord" (Luke 2:22). Later the Gospels tell us that little children and infants were brought to Jesus for Him to touch them and bless them (Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17). In following this practice, we encourage parents to publicly dedicate their children to the Lord.

**What is the difference between Infant Baptism and Child Dedication?** Those who practice Infant Baptism believe in Baptismal Regeneration, which means that a person (infant) comes into the blessings of grace (salvation) through their baptism. We believe that salvation comes by faith alone and baptism is not required for salvation, but in obedience to the act of salvation. Therefore, believing that an infant is not old enough to know his/her need for salvation we dedicate both the parents and the child during our Dedication Ceremony. First we dedicate the child to the Lord symbolizing our desire that they would come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ in their future and we dedicate ourselves (the parents) to the Lord as a promise to raise our children modeling what it is like to be a "fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ."

**Do the parents need to be Christians in order to dedicate their child?** Yes. As a couple or single parent standing before God dedicating their child to him in a Christian church, your life should show the characteristics of Christ. Sometimes people bring their babies for dedication because it is "the thing to do." Hearts that genuinely desire to please him without regard for what others think honors God. Christian Dedication of babies is for Christian families.

**Can a couple be unmarried and sexually active and still publicly dedicate their child to the Lord at Morning Star Fellowship?** No. Having sexual relationships with someone outside the boundaries of marriage is displeasing to God and considered fornication or adultery. (Ephesians 5:5; Hebrews 13:4) Since parents' lives are the greatest example to their child of what a Christian should be, we could not dedicate a child under these circumstances.

**What if I'm a Single Parent; Can I dedicate my child to the Lord?** Absolutely. We encourage single parents who are following Biblical principles in raising their children to dedicate their children and themselves to the Lord.

**Does dedicating my child guarantee that they will become a Christian?** No. Each of us makes that decision on our own. However "values are more caught than taught" and we do believe that by dedicating your life as parents, to Jesus Christ and faithfully living as a Christian believer, your child will one day make the decision to serve the same God that you serve.