

IS IT WRONG TO HAVE A DEDICATION CEREMONY FOR A CHILD?

Dear Bro. John: Is it scriptural for the church to conduct child dedication ceremony? Loran.

Dear Bro. Loran: The New Testament says nothing about a “child dedication ceremony.” This is a practice originating in Catholicism and associated with their practice of infant baptism and membership. It has been borrowed from the Catholics by most Protestant bodies. For some 200 years our brethren have not practiced such ceremonies. In recent years a few who are tired of walking in the old paths of Bible Christianity have started this practice. Since Scripture knows nothing of this practice, their authority can only be that mentioned above.

That said, I must say it is never wrong to pray for others. We pray for young couples who are getting married, For couples having difficulties, for old Christians who are weak and infirm, for the safety of those serving in the military or law enforcement and rightly so. Thus it would not be wrong to have a prayer for a newborn child and for their parents. Such would be commendable. The thing we must guard against is that having taken one harmless step we taken others which are obviously away from God’s will. To have a prayer for a new born confers no special privileges on him or his parents. It in no way makes him a member of the church. Only those old enough to believe and obey Christ can be born of water and Spirit and enter the kingdom of heaven (John 3:3-5). A prayer for a child has nothing to do with forgiveness of sins since babies are innocent of wrong doing (Jas. 4:17). They do not inherit sin as our religious neighbors teach (Ezek. 18:20). To speak of a “dedication ceremony” suggests something formal that is a stated matter of the Christian religion. Since Lord said nothing about such a ceremony, better to say we will have a prayer asking God’s blessing on this child. JHW

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