



CHURCH DEDICATION:

PURPOSE

The practice of house dedication varies according to culture and the wishes of each individual family. The world church does not have any regular tradition for such service. Some family may request the dedication when purchase or building their first home, some when they pay off the mortgage and the home is truly there. Still others ask for a house dedication whenever they move to a different home. Typically, the house dedication is held after the house is completed, the furniture installed, and probably the family moved in. Such a service provides an excellent opportunity to invite the neighbors to the special occasion to get acquainted with them, and to establish one's family as a Christian witness in the neighborhood. This is the purposes of dedicating a house: to set it aside to be spiritual service to the family and their neighborhood.

WHO OFFICIATES: No license or ordination is required for house blessing services an elder may perform the service, but should do so with the knowledge and cooperation of the pastor.

ORDER OF SERVICE: Attendees often include non Christian neighbors. People typically gather in the living room of the home and may the room be crowded. Some will likely be standing. Thus, the service should usually be no more than 30 minutes in length. The following order is suggested:

Congregation – This should be considered optional, depending on the situation. Appropriate songs include "Happy the Home" and "Love at Home."

Prayer – Since there are three prayers in this short service, the first and last should be brief and not repeat the prayer of blessing. This first prayer is for the purpose of invoking God's presence in the service. History of house and family – This could be given by a family member, perhaps the head of the household.

Message. – The message might include: Scripture such as Genesis 24:67, Psalm 127; 2 Samuel 23:15; Isaiah 65: 21-24; Luke 10:38-42; Micah 4:4. A story or poetry. Litany such as

asking questions of the family either informally or in a written litany and receiving their answers as a family commitment. Suggested questions: Do you pledge to make this house a place of you're, where the family altar and daily devotion are revered? Do you pledge to make this house a place of family love and unity? Do you pledge to make this house a light and a blessing to the community?

Candle ceremony – Your message could close with the lighting of a candle to symbolize the light of Jesus present in this home and the use of this house to let that light shine throughout the neighborhood. The candle can remain burning throughout the remainder of the service.

Prayer of blessing – The family might kneel with joined hands in a circle surrounding the kneeling pastor or elder. Others stand surrounding the family. Include in your prayer a blessing on the house, the family, and the neighborhood.

Special song:- Bless this house” is an ideal song for this setting.
Benediction - Perhaps a formal benediction such as Numbers 6:24-26

House tour - At this juncture the family may wish to invite guest to tour the house. Refreshments are optional.

24. WEDDING :

“The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It was designed to be a blessing to mankind. And it is a blessing whenever the marriage covenant is entered into intelligently, in the fact of God, and with due consideration for its responsibilities” Every wedding should therefore be a time of spiritually renewal, joyful celebration, and individualized service to the couple and their families.

DENOMINATIONAL GUIDELINES:

Who officiates In chapter6 Officers and Their Duties,” the church manual stipulates, “In the marriage ceremony the charge, vows, and

declaration of marriage are given only by an ordained minister except in those areas where division committees have taken action to approve that selected license or commissioned ministers who have been ordained in as local elders may perform the marriage ceremony. Either an ordained ministers, license or commissioned minister, or a local elder may officiate in delivering the sermonette, offering the prayer, or in giving the blessing.” In other word words, you as local elder may not perform the entire service, but you may assist. As the ranking local leader your presence and interest can be crucial.

Pastors restricted. There are some circumstances where denominational guidelines forbid ministers to marry a given couple. There are circumstances where pastors’ own consciences prevent them from performing the ceremony. In either case, couple may feel rejected and church members may misunderstand. There is no more important or delicate time for elders to support their pastors.

Spiritual ceremony: In many countries in the world a church wedding involves both a legal contract and a spiritual commitment. In other countries a religious ceremony cannot take place until a civil/legal ceremony has taken place. Any wedding ceremony in which the secular overshadows the spiritual should be considered inappropriate in The Holy Seed Church.

Congregation guidelines: You or your pastors should lead your church in preparing wedding guidelines. Do this at a time when no request for a wedding has been received and no feelings are likely to be hurt. Give these guidelines, along with a wedding application should list specific requests of the couple and reflect that the guidelines have been read and will be followed. Study the church Manual and minister’s manual with your church board to make them aware of denominational marriage guidelines. Then, based on these and local customs/tradition, draw up your church’s own guidelines.

Items you may wish to include: who may be married in the church; music whether or not the church’s wedding coordinator must be used; decoration; candles; dress, photographs; rice or confetti; reception; fees equipment and services available from the church. Exceptions to the guidelines must be few, and should be approved only by a designated committee. Pastors

should not have to take full responsibility for dealing with the aggravation expressed by families whose plans have been contrary to the congregation's guidelines.

25. STUDY GUIDE:

Note: Special services are just that, special, and they need to be planned and conducted as such. Normally the pastor leads out and, as an elder; you are there to assist him on those occasions.

KNOW:

- (a) Baptism is a symbol of death to the old life and the beginning of a new life in Jesus. It demonstrates a person's desire to become a member of God's family.**
- (b) It is important that new members become bonded into the church community and are made to feel accepted and loved by the congregation.**
- (c) Dedication of a child reminds each of us of God's miracle of birth and the commitment of parents and congregation to support and help "raise up a child in the way he should go."**
- (d) Communion is one of the most solemn and yet joyous occasions in our churches. While it is a time that calls for heart-searching and forgiveness, it is also a time of encouragement and spiritual renewal. Assisting or leading this special service is one of the deepest spiritual duties of an elder.**
- (e) The holy Seed Church observe open communion. Anyone desiring to partake of the emblems of our Lord's death is welcome to participate.**
- (f) An elder can be agent of spiritual blessing to those who are unable to attend Communion by visiting and holding a simple Communion format with them.**
- (g) The time of a death and planning of the funeral is an important time of ministry by an elder. It is important to be sensitive to a family's needs, culture, and traditions during this time.**
- (h) A new parish induction is a special service that only elders can perform. This service, and the subsequent support of the new pastor, can help minimize the difficulties of transition for both the congregation**

and the new pastor and his family. If you do not emphasize this significant service, no one will.

{I} Prayer for the sick is another form of ministry through which an elder can be a great blessing to the people. Those prayers can come during visitation or through a formal anointing service. A wedding is a time of spiritual renewal, joyful celebration, and individualized service to the couple and their families.

26. This questions are sample how to study your Bible:

- (1) What are the steps in preparing someone for baptism?
What are your responsibilities in that preparation?**
- (2) What are the four basic purposes of child dedication?**
- (3) What is the different between a church dedication and a church opening?**
- (4) What are ways that an elder can help out in the planning of a church dedication?**
- (5) What does "open communion" mean?**
- (6) How soon should you visit the family after you hear of the death of a family member?**
- (7) What are the three suggestions for smoothing the transition of a new pastor?**
- (8) List the steps involved in an anointing service.**
- (9) Why it is it important to have wedding guidelines for your church? Why should this be done when no wedding are being planned?**

27. GUIDELINES HOW TO HANDLE PRACTICLE:

- (a)What are some things you could do to make a person's baptism more special?**
- (b) Come up with a sample format for a baby dedication, and what the church can do tangibly for the family and child.**
- (c) What could be done for the children during a communion service to help them understand and experience in their own way its meaning?**
- (d) Write out plan for visiting and supporting a person in grief over a death.**

(e) In what practical ways can you help your congregation smooth the transition of a new pastor? What can you do to bury the old? How can you help support the idea of not replacing too soon? In what ways can you celebrate the new?

47 BREAK OUT SESSION QUESTIONS FOR Group Discussion:

- (1) On a person's baptismal day, what things can you do personally to help him/her become bonded into the church community and made to feel accepted? What are things your church might do to help bond and communicate its acceptance and love? What are some things you could do to make a person's baptism more special?**
- (2) What are some specific things you have done/seen in relation to making a child dedication special?**
- (3) How might you help increase participation of more members in communion?**
- (4) What does "The Holy Seed Church observe open communion" mean to you?**
- (5) What specific help could you be to a pastor during times of funerals and weddings? What are some ways you might support a family during the time of a death?**
- (6) How do you feel about the concept of not replacing a pastor for around three months?**
- (7) What might you do to welcome a new pastor to your congregation?**
- (8) What are some ways to help your congregation smooth the transition of a new pastor? What can you do to bury the old?**