

**TALKING POINT #21**  
**LIFE'S TURNING POINTS #1: THE CHURCH AT BIRTH**

**A NEW SERIES**

If Church is a community, then the Church should have a role in the big moments of the lives of its members. Unfortunately, with modern taboos, we don't talk about these moments. It used to be said that the Church's business could be summarised as "hatched, matched and dispatched," or birth, marriage and death, but what should that role look like? That's what this series will endeavour to answer. You may be challenged to ask questions but hopefully you will be inspired to play your part.

**LIFE BEGINS**

The birth of a child is an amazing event – full of uncertainty, joy, pain, blessing and change. When a child is born or when a family adopts a child, they are blessed with a wonderful gift from God. So often, though, Churches make children and young families feel unwelcome because kids make noise.

But, that's not the attitude commanded by Scripture. God values children, Jesus blessed children and gives them as examples for our faith! So, how should birth be celebrated in the Church?

**WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?**

When Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary followed Jewish custom and presented Him at the Temple to be circumcised and to offer a sacrifice of thanks (Luke 2:21-24). While Jewish circumcision requirements have been abolished, Christians have continued to observe this tradition of presenting the baby at Church to be blessed and to thank God for the child.

Additionally, the Law commanded parents to teach their children about God (Deut 6:7) and to occasionally eat with priests to share around God's word (Deut 12:18). So, it is clear that God loves children and puts the onus on parents to teach and nurture their children in His truth, grace and love.

The clearest and most touching illustration of Jesus' love for children comes when parents brought their children to be blessed by Him and the disciples tried to send them away (Mark 10:13-16). In this passage, we see Jesus Himself take the children in His arms and bless them.

**NOW FOR US AT FOREST LAKE**

The way we apply these principles at FLBC are three-fold:

1. When a baby comes into a family, we practice Child Dedication, rather than Christening, given our views on Baptism (which you can read about in Talking Point #4). We set aside some time in our service to thank God for the child, dedicate the baby to God, publicly ask the parents to commit to raising the child in the knowledge of God and to ask the Church to support the parents in their God-given task;
2. We try to provide practical support to the family as they adjust to the new arrival; and
3. We have an amazing team working in Children's Ministry to teach children about Jesus.

**CONCLUSION**

Children are a gift from God, for which we are particularly grateful to God. So, we celebrate children, we love children and we acknowledge our responsibility to demonstrate Jesus to children that they may know Christ's salvation and fulfil God's purpose for them.