

# Good Shepherd Baptist Missions

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gsbministries.org

A Ministry of  
East River Baptist Church



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## Serious Praying

“What you want is a *serious* truck.” That was the response of a truck salesman in Tennessee (1994) when I asked him to show me trucks that were capable of towing a travel trailer. This preacher didn’t know the needed parts to make up a “*serious* truck.” Didn’t know how much of a difference there was between a half ton, a three quarter ton and a full one ton truck. I was about to be educated. Over the years the difference between praying and *serious* praying came to my understanding. Beginning in 1973, Ralph Taylor, who is currently in critical physical condition, was my teacher holding weekly prayer meetings for men that often lasted late into the night. Those were serious prayers offered in serious prayer meetings and God revealed Himself and His will during those times.

In 1993, after the grave side service for Robert Barnes in West Memphis, AR, Ronnie Trenton and I, along with a few other preachers who had attended the funeral, traveled across the Mississippi river to Maranatha Baptist Church in Memphis where Hubert Kennedy was the pastor. We were compelled to pray, to meet with God, to determine His will, to hear His voice, to get divine direction, and to fellowship with Him. We scattered throughout the church auditorium and prayed one at a time. When the last one finished praying both Hubert and Ronnie separately made a bee line to me and said that God had impressed on them while they were praying that I was to come back in a few weeks with Ronnie when he was scheduled to preach a revival for Maranatha. God had not spoken to me about it; but since they were so adamant and relentless, on the second day, I finally agreed to come back. There were many long and expensive miles to travel between Reeltown, AL and Memphis, TN; and I did not have any known business there. All they knew was that God had impressed on them while praying that I was to be there. None of us had a clue as to what was on God’s schedule. I did know that both Ronnie and Hubert were in touch with God at the time, but I resisted coming back because the whole idea appeared to me to be a dead end. At the same time, I knew I had to follow their lead.

A month or so later, Meige made the trip with me to Memphis for the revival. While there Pastor Dayton Barnes called and asked me to meet with him in West Memphis, Arkansas. Sitting in his custom van in the Wal Mart parking lot, he asked me to organize a ministry in memory of his deceased son Robert. Ronnie Trenton had previously expressed to him that God had given this writer a gift of administration and that I was the man he needed to talk to. I agreed to organize such a ministry. At that time neither of us knew any particulars or direction other than that it needed to be a helps ministry mostly for missionaries. At the end of the revival, we had an all night prayer meeting where several ladies prayed throughout the night as did the men mentioned above. Brother Kennedy’s wife Carolyn, my wife Meige, and Ronnie’s wife Reva, plus Melody Bailey and her precious, now-deceased mother, and Madrew were there. God met with us. It was a very special spiritually-powerful night with the rich presence of God. At that prayer meeting He secured, in my heart, the moving forth of the ministry.

A few weeks later BIMI missionary James Manness and I spent a week (Mon thru Fri both days and evenings) praying and discussing possibilities for this new ministry. We were in the missions apartment at Oak Crest Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee where Jay Smith is the pastor. At the end of those days of prayer, God birthed Good Shepherd Baptist Mission and made me to know exactly what had to be done. The ministry concept was totally new, and the name was to be Good Shepherd because from the beginning it belonged to Him—it was His ministry—the Good Shepherd—the Lord Jesus Christ. Neither this preacher nor anyone else could claim this

ministry as theirs for it bore His name. The ministry was to primarily help missionaries but pastors too and evangelists as well. We would offer them a toll free telephone number to call in case their vehicle broke down while traveling or if they needed temporary emergency housing. The need was huge—much greater than I really knew, until the calls started pouring in. It was to be a totally giving ministry with no regard for building a big name or anything else big—not even any buildings. We would use existing church properties and involve as many people as possible. The ministry was to work in teams with other men and ministries. God had given clear and concise directions during the week of prayer.

Not knowing how we were going to get the attention of preachers and to get their participation, prayer was made. My experience has been that the more time and effort one dedicates to prayer (*serious* praying), the greater things God does: the more He manifests Himself and His plan and His ways and His presence, His power, and His provisions. I asked Him in simple childlike faith “Lord, how are you going to make the ministry known?” I had been a pastor for seventeen and a half years but was not well known outside of the areas where I had been a pastor. Shortly thereafter, this almost unknown preacher was at a preachers fellowship meeting in Mississippi and was talking to an individual pastor when I suddenly became aware of a large number of men gathered around me listening. That is when I said to myself “Ah, I see.” It was like God had whispered in each one’s ear and said “move over there and listen!” And they did.

Soon thereafter we started several week-long, *serious* prayer meetings. First in Haden, AL at Living Waters Youth Camp in Hayden, AL where Mike Ragland is the director. Mike had previously held prayer meetings but this was to be for a week and in partnership with GSBM. After that, one was originated at Smith Chapel Baptist Church in Colt, AR where J.T. Baskins is pastor and finally at Faith Baptist Temple in North Ridgeville, OH where Ray Carpenter is the pastor. GSBM had joined in partnership with these men and their respective ministries and they were asked simply that the time be spent in praying with no preaching. Only men came to the prayer meeting in Alabama, but men and women came to Arkansas—men and women who needed God and who really believed that time spent in prayer would be more profitable than anything else. At these prayer meetings, God gave direction and power to GSBM and others as well.

Down through these eighteen years of GSBM ministry, every advance or change has been accompanied by prayer. For years, Ralph Taylor, S.T. Janney and I met once a month for two days of isolated prayer. In October of this year (2011), S.T. Janney and I met on three occasions for two days each to pray for the direction of GSBM and for other needs.

God protects, provides for, defends, directs and honors men who pray; and consequently builds His Spiritual works around those men. By experience, I have learned that there is closet prayer and there is corporate prayer – and there is a place and need for both. When we take the time and make the effort to separate ourselves for the explicit purpose of praying, then God demonstrates His power to make things happen. Once one gets accustomed to having Him give orders, it becomes a fearful thing to move without the same. God still speaks to His people especially during prayer times.

The individual ministries of GSBM were all started through God’s direct leadership, in the places He wanted them, at the time He wanted them, and with the men He wanted to work with.

The year 2012 will bring new challenges and certainly new opportunities for ministry. The only way that we can know the will of God personally and as pertaining to ministry is for our Lord to give direct leadership. Jesus gave His life for souls. He continues to be serious about His men and His ministries and He listens to and interacts with *serious* praying.

Matthew 18:20 “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

James 5:16 “Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D. H. Easter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".