

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mrs. Calvert, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, Mr. Douglas' mother, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Kelly Hall, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Mr. Gary Newsome, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mr. Winns.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:  
[www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com](http://www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com)
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

## Oak Grove Church of Christ Bulletin

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## Responding to Natural Disasters

By Derek Long

Natural disasters come in many different forms. Natural disasters can strike almost any place throughout the world. Some places are more prone to certain natural disasters but hardly anywhere is free from the risk of natural disasters of some kind. Jesus told His disciples to expect natural disasters to arise even before the temple at Jerusalem would be destroyed. Matthew 24:6-8 says, "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." How should we respond to natural disasters?

The book of Genesis records for us natural disasters of famine which came upon the land of Canaan on multiple occasions. In the days of Abram, a famine came upon the land and Abram went to Egypt (Genesis 12:10). In the days of Isaac, a famine came upon the land of Canaan again and he went to the land of the Philistines (Genesis 26:1-6). In the days of Jacob and his sons, a famine came upon the land of Canaan and they ended up going to Egypt to buy food and eventually Joseph brought his family to live in Egypt (Genesis 42:1-5;

43:1-2; 45:6-11). In the period of the judges, there was a famine in the land and Elimelech and his family moved to Moab (Ruth 1:1). One way we might have to respond to a natural disaster is to go to a place not being affected by the natural disaster until the situation where we are changes.

When a natural disaster strikes, as individuals we have a responsibility to show love toward our fellow man by helping them as we have opportunity and ability. The second greatest commandment is, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39). Jesus shows in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) whoever we see in need and have the opportunity to help is our neighbor. Galatians 6:10 gives a command for individual Christians saying, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Christians should respond to natural disasters by seeking to help others and do good toward them as the opportunity arises.

When a natural disaster arises, brethren in a particular location may be in need of assistance and brethren may send to help those who are in need. We find an example of such taking place in Acts 11:27-30. It says, “And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.” Here we find brethren sending to other Christians to help them when they were going to face a famine. Such would certainly authorize us

to do the same sort of thing today. Congregations are able to help needy saints but are not authorized to help non-Christians because the examples and commands relating to collective benevolence all show we are talking about needy Christians (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37; 11:27-30; Romans 15:25-27; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9). Some practices which certain churches engage in during times of natural disasters are unauthorized. A church collectively helping needy non-Christians is going beyond the Bible pattern for the work of the church. A church donating to a disaster relief fund which will then disperse aid is without Bible authority and should not be done. Non-Christians need aid during natural disasters but the church is not authorized to collectively provide benevolence to non-Christian. Individual Christians need to take care of the need of non-Christians as they have the ability and opportunity.

When a natural disaster strikes, we need to pray for those who are affected. 1 Timothy 2:1-4 says, “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” If we have been impacted by a natural disaster or if others have been, it is always good to pray to God. God is able to provide us with the comfort we need in the midst of tribulations and we can in turn provide comfort to others (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Hopefully these things give us some thoughts of how we might respond to natural disasters and encourage us to look into God’s word for what He teaches us to do in such times!