

# DeFoore's long way from Abilene as 'Texas Envoys' to Afghanistan

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## Texas Envoys find purpose in Afghan hospital

**By John Hall**

*Texas Baptist Communications*

KABUL, Afghanistan—God gave Rick DeFoore what he prayed for, even if he didn't fully understand what he was requesting.

DeFoore confesses he was "stuck" in a routine in Abilene and couldn't escape—the same thing week after week.

He prayed each day for a year that God would change his life without any sign of an answer. Each day, he wanted change even more.



Rick and Janet DeFoore have met many people in Afghanistan in their role as Texas Envoys, including this 13-year-old girl who lives with her father and four smaller children. Her mother died in childbirth recently, making her the caretaker of the children. (Photo by Rick DeFoore)

“God was working on us and had us in a place where I was just crying out for answers and had me in a place of almost desperation to understand why I was going through the struggles I was going through,” DeFoore said.

Then the longtime Hendrick Health System employee found an opportunity. He received a job opportunity that would utilize his knowledge of hospitals and organizational talents. It was the ideal match for him.

“The only problem was it was in Kabul, Afghanistan,” he said.

That may have been a problem, but DeFoore couldn’t resist the chance to alter his life. He and his wife, Janet, signed a one-year contract to help an Afghan hospital build its day-to-day infrastructure from the ground up.

God led the couple to Afghanistan, DeFoore said, looking back. The long wait for an answer to prayer made him willing to consider a job in Afghanistan. Soon after they made the decision to go, people in their church—Pioneer Drive Baptist in Abilene—connected them with people in Kabul. Before the DeFoores arrived, they had a place to stay and multiple contacts in the city.

The DeFoores became Texas Envoys, part of a volunteer missions program of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and received several resources that helped prepare them for what they would be experiencing. They’re also supported by Texas Baptist prayers.

“I know its God’s purpose and plan,” DeFoore said.

He acknowledges progress has been slow during the first four months of building the hospital’s policies and procedures, but he has built relationships crucial to success.

The DeFoores also hope to have a spiritual impact. They have found Afghan Christians to be extremely welcoming. One of the Christian women he met

came to Christ through First Baptist Church in Lubbock while studying at Texas Tech University.

The DeFoore's also have had the opportunity to invest in the staff who help the couple around their house, as well as other Afghan men to whom he provides leadership development coaching.

Years ago, God called DeFoore to hospital work. Now, he believes, God has called him to take that calling to Afghanistan.

"It is my ticket into the country," he said. "You can't go as a missionary. You go as a schoolteacher, an electrician, an engineer. ... It's also an indication that your vocation is a calling."

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