

Del Rio congregation uses recreation to reach community

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DEL RIO—A Southwest Texas pastor wants to meet his community's spiritual needs through recreation.

Ruben Chairez, pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Del Rio, believes it is important to bring the community and churches together. His church did this in part by holding a basketball tournament. Some groups drove to the tournament from as far as three hours away.

The church also sponsors other events, such as concerts, workshops, block parties and soccer games, for the community. Church members prayerwalk school campuses on Saturdays, interceding for students, teachers, parents and anyone involved with the school system, Chairez said.

The church uses these outreach tools to draw the community together and bring their neighbors closer to Christ. Church members teach seminars on family life, and the response to this and other events has been positive.

"They support it 100 percent," Chairez said of the community's reaction.

Volunteers from Primera Iglesia Bautista lead devotionals before the tournaments and events, and they also distribute New Testaments and tracts to the people participating.

"We help anyone who has questions or wants to know more," Chairez said.

The outreach activities are part of Texas Hope 2010, a Baptist General Convention of Texas initiative encouraging Christians to pray for those around them, care for people in need and share the gospel with every person in Texas by Easter 2010.

For more information about Texas Hope 2010, visit www.texashope2010.com. To donate to support Texas Hope 2010 efforts, visit www.bgct.org/give.