

Italy pastor pitches in when he can with disaster relief

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Joseph Barrett took time away from his pastoral duties recently to lend a hand when the Ellis County disaster relief chainsaw team responded after a storm toppled trees across a broad swath north of Corsicana.



Pastor Joseph Barrett is pictured with his wife Natalie and daughter Tessa. (Courtesy Photo)

Barrett is pastor of Central Baptist Church in Italy and became a trained Texas Baptist Men disaster relief volunteer last year.

“I don’t get to volunteer that much because I’m a full-time pastor, but I happened to be able to take some time” at the end of the week, he said.

He mentioned two reasons for being a TBM disaster relief volunteer: “It’s a chance to do something different and in a different environment. ... [and]

getting your boots on the ground is enlivening to your church body.”

Several members of Central Baptist are TBM volunteers. Barrett has encouraged involvement in ministry through TBM, and “I push it every time there’s a training around,” he said.

TBM and its regional partners plan multiple training events around the state each year, many in the spring. Disaster relief training opportunities are listed on the [TBM Events page](#).

David Hardage, a longtime Baptist pastor and retired executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, promotes church engagement through TBM.

“When a pastor leads the way in church ministry, whatever that ministry is, the congregation tends to give more credibility to the ministry, as well as making positive decisions to be involved themselves,” he said.

Barrett said he likes setting an example of service, but he added, “I wouldn’t want to represent it like I did something special.”

Other volunteers, many retired, had worked in Corsicana the entire week before the pastor arrived.

And his thoughts were with his congregation.

“Getting buy-in from other members is easy to accomplish if you’re buying in yourself,” he said.