

With lawn mowed & car washed, no excuse for missing Sunday worship

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INGLESIDE—On a typical Sunday, many Americans are washing their cars, mowing their lawns, trimming hedges or performing a variety of other chores.

Pastor James Anaya of Bethel Baptist Church in Ingleside wondered what people would do if they didn't have to work around the house. His church decided to find out.

For one month, church members spent their Saturdays working on about 400 service opportunities that would free time for people living around them to come to church on Sunday. They helped people with yard work. They washed cars. They even gave cold water to joggers.



Pastor James Anaya of Bethel Baptist Church in Ingleside mows the lawn for a neighbor. For one month, he and members of the church spent their Saturdays working on chores people had been doing on Sunday and inviting their neighbors to use their newfound free time to attend church.

(PHOTO/Courtesy of Bethel Baptist Church in Ingleside)

“We recognize our churches are empty on Sunday,” Anaya said. “But you can drive through any community on Sunday morning and see people washing their cars, cutting their lawns. If we can help them, maybe they won’t have anything to do on Sunday and will come to church.

“If there was someone outside mowing their grass or washing the car, we would stop and help them.”

After members finished with a service project, they distributed information about the church and invited people to worship the next day. If people weren’t interested in attending Bethel, members volunteered to help people find a church that might be more attractive to them. Bethel members wanted to introduce Christ to their community, no matter what church residents ultimately chose to attend.

“The project was about reaching out to people who had not heard the gospel or did not have a church home,” Anaya said.

The church’s ministry focus called Our Mission Now is part of the congregation’s participation in Texas Hope 2010, a Baptist General Convention of Texas initiative to share the hope of Christ with every Texan by Easter 2010. Bethel will continue with ministry projects throughout the Texas Hope 2010 emphasis.

The church’s efforts were partially supported by a BGCT LifeCall Missions grant that is made possible by gifts to the [Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions](#).

While some of the people the church has helped already have come to Sunday services, Anaya believes the church only is beginning to see the fruit of its labor. The service projects provided an opening for church members to build relationships with their neighbors. Through those friendships, they can pray for their community, care for those around them and share the gospel.

“Church is not just about showing up for church on Sunday,” Anaya said.
“It’s about giving back.”

For more information on Texas Hope 2010, www.texashope2010.com.