

## What Hurricane Florence Taught Me

Mike Sandlin, NCBM Men's Ministry State Coordinator

11/26/2018

It has been a few months since my last article. Hurricane Florence disrupted many lives in September. For many, the disruption will continue for many months – possibly years. Immediately after the storm I was asked to lead a NC Baptist on Mission Disaster Relief Operational Center (DROC). I was honored to be asked to do such a task and oversaw the site at Scotts Hill for two months. I learned a valuable lesson on the need to have men in your life who have your back.

During times of disaster, rather it be a hurricane, health issues, financial crisis, relationship troubles, or any other number of things that disrupt our lives, we can easily lose focus on our relationship with God. Some say in those times that they find themselves drawn closer to God. I understand that. However, there also times when we might find ourselves neglecting our intimate and intentional time with the Father during times of distress. This is where I found myself.

After a week of operating the site a pastor friend came by and asked how I was doing. I told him that I was finding it hard to have time with the Father in the Word and prayer. The days began early and, by the end of the day, I was tired and just ready to go to bed. This is when my “Got Your Back” friends came into play.

These are four men who I meet with weekly to talk and pray with. These men saw the struggle I was having and suggested we meet at the DROC location. These men were life saviors in many ways. A couple of them volunteered their time to help out during the week. Others began praying specifically and checking up on me during the week. Every week we met for an hour at the DROC to share and pray with one other.

I call them my “Got Your Back” friends because we had been studying Gary Yagel's book ‘Got Your Back’ for the past several weeks before the hurricane hit. We had begun developing a bond with each other as we walked through this book and spent time in prayer. We shared our individual struggles with one another. These men have become my life saviors in so many ways. They help keep me focused not only on the task at hand but also on my relationship with God.

So often we can get so caught up with what we are “doing for” God that we tend to neglect time “with” Him. I liken it to a father who spends so much time at work because he wants to provide for his family that he actually – without realizing it – begins to neglect his family. Though we know the Father will never leave us – neglecting to spend time with Him damages our relationship with him. This is why we need men in our lives who will encourage and pray with us during our struggles. We need men who will challenge us when they see us veering from the path God has set before us.

My ‘Got Your Back’ friends lived the example Solomon wrote about in Ecclesiastes 4:9-10; *“Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their efforts. For if either falls, his companion can lift him up; but pity the one who falls without another to lift him up.”* It is good to have such friends – brothers in Christ – who are there to lift you up in your time of need.

My question to you is; “Do you have men in your life who have your back?” If not, seek them out. You may not think you need men like this; but, believe me – you do. Gary Yagel's book *Got Your Back* is a great book to work through with a few friends to understand this concept.

Together in the adventure and challenge to disciple men.

- Mike