

## **WHEN TO CALL THE ENON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION D.O.M...**

**THE “TOP TEN”** times to call the association are listed below. Of course, we want you to feel free to call anytime you want for no reason at all. But there are times when you should call us—when it would be helpful to you and to the association as well.

1. **When the pastor is sick or there is a death in the family.** I don't mean just to find someone to fill the pulpit at the last minute. I want to serve as a “pastor to the pastors, “ but it is difficult to do if I don't know what is going on. James says that when anyone is sick, he is to call for the elders. The elders are not supposed to find out from someone else after it is too late.
2. **When the pastor leaves.** The resignation of the pastor leaves a leadership vacuum that sometimes creates turbulence in the church. The association can assist church members in finding interim help as well as training the committee in the pastor search process. No church should ever have to wonder what the next step is going to be.
3. **When you need something.** We want EBA to be the first place you go when looking for assistance. Whether it is a video projector, a video Bible study, flags for VBS, Sunday School training, a laminating machine, or whatever—if we don't have it, we will either get it or find out where you can get it.
4. **When you have a question.** Associations are the first link between churches and the denomination. If you need information about programs or emphases in the conventions, if you need help finding out about a parachurch organization, or if you have questions about issues that your local resources can't answer, come to us. If we don't know, we'll find out and get back to you.
5. **When there are decisions to make.** One of the skills that I fill the Lord has led me to develop over the years is that of planning. From articulating a vision to implementing a plan to consultation or a church revitalization process and from developing resources to evaluating results, administration has been an area of study for more than thirty years. Most churches could benefit from outside help in planning. Why not let someone who already knows your church lend a hand? Especially since you are already paying him!
6. **When disaster strikes. I am speaking literally, not figuratively.** In Baptists' disaster response system, the director of missions has the authority to call on the statewide network for assistance in the case of wind or ice storms (our two most common disasters), flooding, fire or any other natural disaster. When church buildings or members' homes have been damaged, there is no need for a congregation to suffer alone. We are family, and we will help.
7. **When there is trouble.** All writings on conflict management agree that conflict is inevitable. There are certain stages, conflict becomes more than participants can handle. In early stages, outside help is beneficial; in advanced stages, outside help is the only hope for constructive resolution. It is better to seek help too soon than to seek it too late. Too often, churches are losing members or splitting or disbanding before someone come to me. Call me!

8. **When something good happens.** Did you set a new mark for attendance? Has the Lord blessed your church with decisions and baptisms? Are you starting new Sunday school classes or ministries? Are you taking a missions trip? Did you have a particularly joyful worship or fellowship experience? Tell us about it. Not only will it encourage us here in the office, but also we can share it with others so that they will also be encouraged. Remember, a blessing shared is a blessing multiplied.
9. **When you have an idea.** Henry Blackaby taught us that the body must communicate with itself for God's work to get done. As God moves on your heart about potential ministries, don't share it with just your local church. Share it with us, too. The other people that God is calling to the same ministry may not be in your church but in other nearby churches. We can help you get the word out and make connections.
10. **When I've messed up.** I didn't really what to put this one in, but since I do fail to come through sometimes, I had to include it. When I let you down, please don't write me off without at least letting me know why. I hope you will give me a chance to make it up to you. I hope you will forgive me. But even if you decide to overlook my mistake, please let me know so that I can try to do better next time.

**I MAY NOT HAVE INCLUDED** all the possible situations in which I would want you to call us here at the office (or at my home or on my cell). So let me conclude by encouraging you to call me no matter what. We cannot communicate too much. Let's forge stronger ties among ourselves by letting each other know what is going on. Call me!

*Bro. Tim*