

What Fellow Megachurch Pastor Robert Jeffress Really Thinks About Joel Osteen's Response to Harvey

Robert Jeffress, pastor of First Baptist Dallas, says the harsh criticism of fellow megachurch pastor Joel Osteen was unfair.

"I think pastor Osteen, like every pastor I know, has a big heart and wants to do everything they can do to help," Jeffress tells *Charisma News*.

The Lakewood Church pastor came under fire when he didn't immediately open his campus as an emergency shelter when Harvey hit over the weekend. As of Tuesday, though, volunteers were serving refugees and taking donations at the Inner Loop location.

"I think [Lakewood's] doing the right thing," Jeffress says. "It takes a little bit of time—especially when you're right in the middle of the disaster like Lakewood Church is—to formulate the best way to help people. I thought it was an unfair criticism."

Jeffress' own congregation, more than 240 miles away from Osteen's, has partnered with multiple relief organizations to help with the hurricane and tropical storm damage.

"We have found that the best thing we can do as a church is partner with people who are already proven experts in disaster relief instead of trying to come up with our own plan," Jeffress says.

The church sent \$50,000 to Texas Baptist Men just this morning

to aid in disaster recovery in Houston and Corpus Christi.

Jeffress' Dallas-based campus also serves as a distribution and collection point for Trusted World, a benevolence organization taking supplies to Houston refugees still in the city and those who have evacuated away from the city.

The church also organized volunteer teams to work with Samaritan's Purse to provide relief after the flood waters subside.

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Samaritan's Purse currently has two of its disaster relief units working in Texas in the Victory and Rockport areas, with two more on the way to be in position to respond as quickly as possible in Houston when the flood waters recede enough for the relief teams to do their work. Another disaster relief unit is scheduled to leave later this week to help hurricane victims in the Galveston area. Teams of volunteers will tarp roofs, mud out homes, clear debris and help people salvage as many of their belongings as possible. Donations to help with the flood relief efforts can be made at .

The money is used to pay for materials (tarps, tools, fuel and so on) and also supplies and food to support the volunteer teams.

To join Samaritan's Purse as a volunteer with the Texas relief efforts, visit .

Billy Graham Rapid Response Team

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Crisis-trained chaplains with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's Rapid Response Team are also working alongside

Samaritan's Purse to provide emotional and spiritual encouragement and support. For more information or to donate to the Rapid Response Team efforts, visit .