

Chaplain Mark Elliott

Forney, Texas

Mark Elliott is the senior pastor of People's Fellowship Assembly of God in Forney, Texas. Forney is approximately 40 miles east of Dallas. This small church was strong and healthy, but Mark wanted them to have a greater impact in their community. He had built relationships with many key leaders in the community, but had not found that “key” he was looking for. At a North Texas District Assemblies of God ministers' meeting Mark found the tool for outreach ministry he needed.

In one of the sessions, Pastor Elliott met Missionary Robby Jernigan. After Robby's presentation on emergency services chaplaincy, Mark asked a host of questions. They visited together several times by phone in the weeks that followed. After much prayer and counsel from Robby, his wife Marie, and the church elders, Mark approached his local fire chief. Their department did not have a chaplain and were quite interested.

In a month or so, Mark was approved as the chaplain for the Forney Fire Department. At first he would just drop by the fire station and visit with the guys on duty. But he had not been issued a uniform, a radio, etc. So if he was not at the station, he did not know when they had a call. And honestly, he was a little unsure of what to do and what not to do. Patiently he waited. After a little time had passed, the chief issued him a hand-held radio and a uniform. He also gave him some guidance as to when to respond and how to conduct himself. As the weeks passed, Pastor Mark got more comfortable with his role as chaplain. In that same period, his department got to know him a little better. Soon they were calling him and inviting him to respond to emergency calls of all types.

Today Mark feels that becoming a fire department chaplain has opened a whole new door of ministry for him. He knows the firefighters, the department leaders, and many of their families. He does not preach AT THEM. His is a ministry of presence. He lives out the Christian life before them, ready to help them as the Lord enables. Of course, they all are welcome to join their chaplain as he fulfills his pastoral role on Sundays and Wednesday nights. Along with his ministry to responders, he responds to 9-1-1 calls almost every day, giving hope and help to citizens in their greatest hour of need.