

# THE FOREST HILL NEWS

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## Forest Hill Church of Christ

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### Elders:

Anthony D. Callahan  
Warren Davenport  
Gregory D. Mangrum  
Harold D. Mangrum  
Keith B. McAlister

### Ministers:

Barry M. Grider,  
Pulpit Evangelist  
Matthew Jones,  
Personal Evangelist  
Garrett Olney, Youth  
Hatton Allen, Youth

### Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.  
Morning Worship.... 10:30 A.M.  
Afternoon Worship.....1:30 P.M.

### Wednesday:

Bible Study ..... 7:00 P.M.

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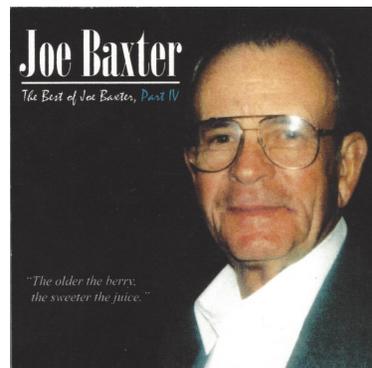
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Joe Baxter  
1925-2017



As the year 2017 came to a close, so did the eventful earthly life of Roy Thomas “Joe” Baxter, who passed away early on the Lord’s Day, December 31. He was 92. Joe was reared in Lawrence County, Tennessee, in the community of Leoma. He was baptized into Christ in the late 1930’s by his grandfather, evangelist M.E. Gibbs. Later, he served in the United States Army during World War II, and always demonstrated before others his love for Christ, the church, and our country.

Joe Baxter was preceded in death by his sweet wife, Dollie Estella, and their daughter, Naomi. Thrilled to adopt Naomi when she was just a few weeks old, her life met tragedy when as a teenager she was thrown from the back of a pickup truck and nearly died. Her life would still be cut short when 22 years later she would die of an inoperable brain tumor. Without a steadfast faith in the Lord, Joe and Dollie could not have survived such an indescribable loss.

Joe Baxter endured because he was a man of the *Word*. He loved the Bible and could quote the Bible. Never ashamed of God’s truth, he did not mind challenging discussions about right and wrong, truth and error. A favorite verse was Jeremiah 10:23, which reads, “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” He loved gospel preachers and was especially close to such great evangelists as Emerson J. Estes, Garland Elkins, and Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

Joe Baxter endured because he was a man of *Prayer*. Joe and I shared a love for Alabama football. I often thought his voice was as close to that of the legendary coach Paul (Bear) Bryant as anyone else I have ever heard. So it is that I loved to hear that deep strong voice lead prayers to the heavenly throne. James

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## Helpful Hints to Song Leaders

Ken Joines

It is interesting and a little strange, but true nonetheless. We seem to be born with the capacity and tendency to sing. Music is powerful. You can take the same words and simply read them, but this will not have nearly the impact as when set to music. Many a cause has soared to victory on the wings of song. A song can grab your attention. Even change your life. God knew that. So he made us, put a song in our hearts and then asked us to -SING. “*Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*” “*Singing with grace in your heart to the Lord.*” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). In his world-famous “Halley’s Bible Handbook”, Henry Halley wrote, “*Congregational singing, next to Bible teaching, is the best feature of a religious service, the most effective way to preach the gospel...Moses sang, and led the people in singing. Miriam sang. Deborah and Barak sang. The angels sing. In heaven, EVERYBODY will sing.*”

I have led a few Singing Schools, and while I am certainly no specialist in the field, even so, 50+ years of preaching has taught me much on the practical end of the spectrum. I have seen what will work and what will not work. I have always been interested in helping our people see the value of beautiful congregational singing. Good singing is a hallmark of the church. It is powerful and is worthy of our efforts to make sure we do it as well as we can.

In my travels all across the country, and preaching for a great many different congregations, I see lots of different styles of leading...and singing. They are different and yet the same in so many ways. Would you please permit me to offer what I hope are some helpful hints especially to those who lead singing? I will do this gently because I have great appreciation for those men who voluntarily offer themselves in this valuable service to God and His church. Incidentally, how long has it been since you thanked your song leader for his service?

### Song Selection

Leaders will do themselves and the congregation a favor if they remember that not all great songs can be done well in a church setting. A song may really move you when sung by a quartet, chorus or some “Christian Music” group, but fall flat when you try to lead it during worship. The reason is simple: Unlike the quartet or chorus, the vast majority of people in the pews are not musicians! And when such songs are used, the result sounds something like a band warming up in the orchestra pit at a concert and this is not conducive to worship. For a song to do what God wants it to do, i.e., “teach and admonish” (Col. 3:16), the people must be able to sing together in unison and harmony.

### Correct Pitch

Very, very few people can consistently pitch a song properly without help from a pitch pipe. Experienced singers often pride themselves in their *imagined* ability to do this, but more often than not they miss it. Pitch it too high and the altos and sopranos can’t reach it; too low and the basses suffer. The result is that soon the people will dread to see your name listed as today’s leader. This is so easily remedied. Song leaders, invest some time and learn how to use a pitch pipe. You’ll do yourself and the congregation a huge favor.

### The Transition

If a hymn has more than one stanza, it is most important at the end of each stanza to pause for just a couple of seconds so the people can draw a breath. I sometimes see a leader who moves too quickly from one stanza to the other. When this happens, the leader will be well into the next stanza before the people have had a chance to follow.

### Tempo

It is a given that a song’s tempo is often determined by a song’s theme itself. For instance, *Rock of Ages* must not be sung in as quick tempos, as say, *We’re Marching to Zion*. It is equally important for a leader to know that the larger the audience, the less able they will be to sing at a fast tempo. A quartet can sing a song at quite a rapid pace, but if you try that in a church of 900 you’ll find yourself a few words ahead of the people every time, resulting in a see-saw atmosphere. I do not like “draggy” singing, but there is one thing worse and that is when the people cannot stay together because the leader wants to go too fast. A good practice is for the leader to actually listen to his people as the song progresses and don’t get ahead of them.

### Other Hints

Never, never use unfamiliar songs at the morning worship hour. We ordinarily have more visitors then, and poor singing will not be a good demonstration of the kind of music God ordained for worship. Stand where you can be seen. And by all means, dress for the occasion; show your respect for what you’re doing. There is no excuse for sloppy or careless dress when leading God’s church before His throne in worship.



(continued from page 1)

records, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). When Joe prayed, his prayers came from deep within his soul. In fact, while visiting him during his decline over the last few years, I would ask if he wanted to pray, and he sometimes would immediately lead the prayer. I was the one encouraged during those moments.

Joe Baxter endured because he was a man of *Song*. Some sing because they are happy, others are happy because they sing. Joe was of the latter category. In fact, early in his life he was one of the most sought after bass voices in the entire southern region of the United States. He was associated with such country music legends as Eddy Arnold, Sonny James, and Grandpa Jones. During the 40’s and 50’s, when gospel music quartets were very popular, he spent much time on the road singing with numerous quartet groups. However, over the last 60 years, members of the church have enjoyed his directing congregational singing at various congregations and in special singings. He has stood in our pulpit and capably led us many, many times.

It was fitting at his funeral service that his protégé, MSOP graduate Stephen Sutton, led some of brother Joe Baxter’s favorite hymns including *Hear Me When I Call*, *Hold to God’s Unchanging Hand*, *Won’t It Be Wonderful There*, *Little Is Much When God Is In It*, *The Haven of Rest*, and *When All of God’s Singers Get Home*. My son, Cason Grider, who was greatly encouraged by Joe, led *I’ll Be Somewhere Listening*. It was an honor for Kenneth Gossett, Keith Mosher, and this writer to share our memories of our beloved brother. A special word of appreciation is extended to Susy Steckol, Joe’s sweet friend and caregiver. She has been a Christ like example of care and compassion in her dedication to the needs of brother Joe during his long illness. I long for the opportunity to join the mighty chorus in heaven where “they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints” (Rev. 15:3).

Barry

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