

Spegal, Jacob B 1930 - 2007

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Jacob Bert "J.B." Spegal, minister was 'man of God's word'

Jacob Bert "J.B." Spegal had a favorite scripture passage, Proverbs: 3: 5-6. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." That provided a blueprint for his life. Brother Spegal was owner of Lazy J Farm, one of the largest dairy farms in southern Kenton County, a father and had been a song leader for 19 years at his home church when he heard God's call for something greater. He went on to play a role in the spiritual lives of countless families across seven counties as a minister and one of the longest tenured pastors in Northern Kentucky.

Brother Spegal, 76, of DeMossville, died Wednesday at his home.

At age 40, already occupied with the time-consuming matter of running the farm and serving as a deacon at Wilmington Baptist Church in Morning View, he began "supply preaching" - filling in for vacationing or ill ministers - and holding revivals at local churches. He had a gift of connecting immediately with those who heard him. "He was down-to-earth, and didn't use big fancy theological terms because that's not who he was," said a daughter, Sara Mann of DeMossville. "He didn't go far in school. He was a working man. He was humble. He spoke to people in terms they could relate to." And folks did.

Brother Spegal was called to serve as interim pastor of Kenton Baptist Church in 1973 and then later that year was appointed to the post on a full-time basis. He was ordained into the Gospel ministry in 1976, and served as pastor of Kenton Baptist for nearly 23 years until returning to the membership of Wilmington Baptist for his "retirement." There, he never really stopped preaching the word of the Lord, his daughter said. He preached his last funeral in 2005, for a longtime family friend. All along, Proverbs 3: 5-6 guided him. "He lived those words," Mann said. "People would say to us, 'Your dad's a man of God's word.' He was." Brother Spegal was a member of the Wilmington Cemetery Board for 36 years.

Surviving in addition to his daughter are his wife of 58½ years, Hazel Benton Spegal; three other daughters, Rebecca Kuss of Prestonsburg, Paula Allen of DeMossville and Crista Caldwell of Crittenden; a son, Phillip Spegal of DeMossville; sisters, Ora Cleveland of DeMossville and Naomi Cummins of Crittenden; 14 grandchildren, 22 step-grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.

Services will be at 11 a.m. Monday at Wilmington Baptist Church, Morning View. Visitation will be from 3 to 6 p.m. Sunday at Chambers and Grubbs Funeral Home, Independence, and from 10 to 11 a.m. Monday at the church. Burial will be in Wilmington Cemetery, Morning View.

Memorials are suggested to Wilmington Baptist Church or Wilmington Cemetery, both at 15472 Madison Pike, Morning View, Ky. 41063; or Oneida Baptist Institute, P.O. Box 67, Oneida, Ky. 40972.