



*Grace Community Church*  
*Biblical Counseling Center*

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## **CONSENT TO COUNSEL**

*Our Goal...* Our goal in providing Christian counseling is to help you meet the challenges of life in a way that will please and honor the Lord Jesus Christ and allow you to enjoy fully His love for you and His plans for your life.

### *Commitment to Biblical Counseling- -*

I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another (Romans 15:14).

All Christians struggle with sin and the effect it has on our lives and our relationships. Whenever believers are unable to overcome sinful attitudes or behaviors through personal efforts, God calls them to seek assistance from other believers, and especially from church leaders, who have the responsibility of providing pastoral counseling and oversight (see Rom. 15:14; Gal. 6:1-2; 2 Tim. 4:1-2; Heb. 13:17; James 5:16). Therefore, this church encourages and enjoins its people to seek counsel from and confess sins to each other, and especially to our leaders.

We believe that the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life (2Tim. 3:16 –17). Therefore, our counseling is based on scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. Unless they specifically state otherwise, none of those who counsel in this church are trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such specialists.

God calls our leaders to set an example for us “in speech, in life, in love, and in faith and purity” (1Tim. 4:12). Therefore, we expect them to treat counselees with every respect and courtesy, and to avoid even the appearance of impropriety or impurity during counseling (Eph. 5:3). We also expect counselees to promptly report to the leadership team any conduct that fails to meet this standard. (We practice the principle of men counseling men or women counseling women and we take extra measures of accountability when we have to make exceptions. Please be aware of this as it could affect your appointment scheduling.)

To prevent our leaders from being placed in situations that might compromise their pastoral commitments, we, the members and attendees of Grace Community Church, agree that we will not try to compel them to testify in any legal proceeding or otherwise divulge any confidential information they receive through pastoral counseling or ministry (Prov. 11:13, 25:9).

There are occasions when our leaders do not have the sufficient time to meet with every person who asks for counseling. At such times, we expect our leaders to give first priority to people who have formally joined the church (Gal. 6:10), and to serve those who only attend the church by referring them to another source of godly counsel.

*Professional Advise* - In the process of Biblical counseling, there are often times when there is a need for significant advise with regards to legal, medical, financial or other technical areas. In those cases, you will be encouraged to seek independent professional counsel. Our pastoral and lay counselors will be happy to cooperate with such advisors and help you to consider their counsel in the light of relevant scriptural principles.

*Commitment to Limited Confidentiality* -

*A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret (Prov. 11:13).*

The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (Matt. 7:12). It also discourages harmful gossip (Prov. 26:20), invites confession (Prov. 11:13), and thus encourages people to seek needed counseling. Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the gospel and the work of the local church, all members and attendees are expected to are to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. In particular. Our leaders will carefully protect all information that they receive through pastoral counseling, subject to the following guidelines.

Although confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when our leaders believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people in the following circumstances:

- When a leader is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advise from other leaders in our church or, if the person attends another church, from the leaders of that church (Prov. 11:14);
- When the person who disclosed the information, or any other person, is in imminent danger of serious harm unless others intervene (Prov. 24:11-12);
- When a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to promote repentance through accountability and redemptive church discipline (Matt. 18:15-20); or,
- When leaders are required by law to report suspected abuse (Rom. 13:1).

*By Signing below, I indicate that I have read the Consent to Counsel Form and the Facts on Biblical Counseling document. I acknowledge my understanding of the above statements and agree to biblical counseling as explained in these documents:*

Dated \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(NOTE: Parent or Guardian must sign for a child)

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