

# Are You Interested in Biblical Discipleship Counseling at Community of Faith Bible Church?

Biblical counselors at Community of Faith Bible Church (COFBC) are available for a limited number of counseling cases. Our counselors (by design) are not certified by the State of Texas; however, each counselor is trained and supervised by other counselors. Additionally, COFBC counselors have had extensive training in biblical discipleship counseling and must meet various training requirements established by the Bible and the Director of the Ministry.

## **Director of the Counseling Ministry**

Dr. Nicolas Ellen, the director of the ministry, is the Senior Pastor of COFBC. In addition to his pastoral and counseling ministries at COFBC, he teaches biblical counseling at the College of Biblical Studies in Houston, Texas in his role as Senior Professor of Biblical Counseling. He holds both a masters and Ph.D. in Biblical Counseling. He has also written numerous books on biblical discipleship counseling and carries on a national teaching ministry on the subject of biblical discipleship counseling.

## **The Role of Scripture to the Counselor**

If you seek counseling from COFBC, we want you to know that all counseling will be conducted in accordance with the counselor's understanding of the Scriptures. All counseling will be biblically based, meaning that the Scriptures will be the authority in all cases. **COFBC does not subscribe to the teachings and methods of modern psychology or psychiatry, whether expressly secular or the result of any attempted integration with biblical principles. Our counselors do not follow the methods of trained or licensed psychotherapists or mental health professionals. Also, our policy is not to make referrals to such persons.**

If you (the counselee) are not sure that you will be interested in biblically-based counseling, you may first attend one or two sessions to discover what biblical discipleship counseling is like. **If you or the counselor determines that you (the counselee) are unwilling to use the Bible as the final authority for your life, future counseling sessions will be terminated.**

Additionally, each counseling session will conclude with the counselor assigning homework. If the counselee is unwilling to complete the assigned homework, future counseling sessions will be terminated until the assigned homework has been completed to the satisfaction of the counselor. **Any future sessions can be terminated by either party. However, if you (the counselee) are a member of COFBC, the Pastor and/or Elders will be notified of the reasons for termination of your counseling sessions and all By-Laws and/or policies of COFBC shall apply. If you are not a member of COFBC, please note that written correspondence will be sent to your church notifying them of the termination of your counseling sessions and the reasons for said termination.**

### **Non-members of COFBC**

Please note that COFBC is committed to the spiritual health of its members, thus **counseling of COFBC members always takes precedence over all non-member related counseling services.**

If the counselee is a member in good standing with a church other than COFBC, the counselee is **required** to invite their Senior Pastor, Elder, or someone else in a leadership position from their local church to accompany them to the counseling sessions.

We recognize and respect the authority and the discipline of the counselee's church. However, if no one in a leadership position is available to attend counseling sessions with the counselee, COFBC's counselor, after seeking guidance and approval from the Director of the Counseling Ministry, may decide to move forward with the counselee. However, the counselee **must** provide to the counselor a written letter from their Senior Pastor and/or Elder(s) authorizing him/her to attend counseling at COFBC. This letter must be signed and on the letterhead of the counselee's church. In addition, this letter **must** provide COFBC with the name and telephone number of the person in counselee's church who will serve as the counselee's accountability partner. We do this because we firmly believe in the leadership of your church, and we only want to come along side of them to offer assistance. Also, this will make transfer back to the pastoral care of the counselee's church much easier to affect.

Additionally, if the counselee is unable to bring someone in leadership with them, or to provide some form of accountability from their local congregation, COFBC may elect not to facilitate the counseling process. This is due to the fact that COFBC believes that the Senior Pastor/Elders are responsible for the spiritual well-being of

their local congregation. Without the involvement or support of the Senior Pastor/Elders or someone in leadership from the counselee's church, COFBC would be assuming responsibility for counselee's spiritual well-being. Nevertheless, if the Director of the Counseling Ministry were to make a determination that extraordinary circumstances do exist which make this requirement unworkable, the Director of the Counseling Ministry may, at his sole discretion, elect to allow the counseling session to go forward in the absence of any approval or presence from the counselee's church leadership.

### **Non-member of a Church**

**If the counselee is currently not a member of a church, for reasons other than church discipline or unresolved sin matters, he/she will be required to attend Sunday services at COFBC while going through COFBC's counseling ministry.** For example, if the counselee is going to have 13 counseling sessions, then COFBC would expect that the counselee would attend COFBC for 13 weeks. After such time, COFBC will be happy to assist the counselee in finding a church home and, of course, the counselee is welcome to examine Community of Faith Bible Church as a possibility.

Our experience has been that for changes in people to be lasting, people need more than the help they receive in formal counseling. They need the total ministry of a church in which the preaching, teaching and fellowship are providing the same kind of help that is given in the counseling sessions. **If the counselee does not attend COFBC on a regular basis (i.e., Sunday services and weekly discipleship classes at least three (3) times a month), all future counseling sessions will be terminated.**

### **Confidentiality**

**Absolute confidentiality is not scriptural. In certain circumstances the Bible requires that facts be disclosed to select others (Matt. 18:15ff). In these areas we will follow the policy and procedures of COFBC. When your church leadership inquires about the status of your sessions, we will disclose to them the information that is necessary for them to effectively and biblically fulfill their responsibility to shepherd you.**

**BY LAW, there are certain situations in which information about individuals undergoing counseling may be released with or without their permission. These situations are as follows: (Romans 13:1-3)**

1. **Where it is proven that children are physically abused, sexually abused, or neglected.**
2. **In emergency situations where there may be proven danger to the counselee or others, as with homicide or suicide, confidentiality may be broken.**
3. **If a court of law issues a legitimate subpoena relating to a child abuse case, we are required by law to provide the information specifically described in the subpoena.**
4. **If an unreported life-threatening felony has been committed, we are required by law to report it to the police.**

**At any time during the counseling, for reasons sufficient to himself/herself, the counselor shall have the option of terminating counseling.**

### **Counselee Responsibility**

It should be understood that biblical discipleship counseling will involve giving scriptural teaching and making practical application of the same to each individual counselee. The counselee is held fully responsible for how he/she implements that counsel.

### **Counselors in Training**

Here at Community of Faith Bible Church we not only provide biblical discipleship counseling but are devoted to training biblical counselors. This means that the counselor may have one to two people assisting him/her in each counseling session.

### **The Bible as the Authority in the Session**

We are confident that the Bible has all of the information necessary for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). There are no problems between persons or in persons that the Bible fails to address either in general or specific principles. Our counselors are not infallible, nor do they pretend to know all there is to know about biblical teaching and its applications to life, but they are well equipped and competent to help people change. They will make a point to differentiate between God's commands and their suggestions. Counselors will also honestly tell you if they are limited in their capacity to address a matter and will seek help from other trained counselors in matters where they feel it is needed.

### **Medical/Legal Advice**

Please note that COFBC does **not** give medical or legal advice.

"If you are willing to enter into this kind of counseling, please fill out the forms attached below. Once you have filled out the forms, please email the forms to [ChurchSecretary@cofbc.org](mailto:ChurchSecretary@cofbc.org), or mail them to us (See our contact information.) Once you have emailed or mailed the forms, call us to see when/if scheduled times of counseling are available."

Thank you for your interest in the Biblical Discipleship Counseling Ministry of Community of Faith Bible Church.