

How to Develop a Biblical Counseling Ministry in the Local Church

This *outline* provides a sample process for developing a biblical counseling ministry in a local church. The process can be organized into four stages.

1. Pre-planning

A. Identify and clarify the leader's understanding of the counseling model.

The doctrine of sanctification

The role of psychology

The biblical model for counseling

B. Note the role of a Coach. (See under point 4 below)

2. Planning

A. Strategic planning steps

How does the counseling ministry express the church's values and mission?

The church's values and mission will include the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) and the Great Commandment (Matt 22:37-40).

What is this ministry's purpose?

Such as: *The Biblical Counseling Ministry is to provide remedial discipleship, support, and guidance in the church and community.*

Biblical foundations

"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all." 1 Thessalonians 5:14

"Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." Romans 15:14

"...of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily." Colossians 1:25-29

"But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things-- that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." Titus 2:1-10

What are the goals of the counseling ministry?

We plan, but God directs. Prov. 16:9

Strategic planning is required for a new project. Neh. chs. 2-4

What is the vision of the counseling ministry?

The vision embraces the values, mission, strategy, goals, and objectives. Vision looks to how the ministry could and should develop in the *future*, factoring in that God will guide and produce the results through us.

God can do more than we could ask or imagine! Eph. 3:20

What strategy will be used?

Equipping the saints for the work of the ministry Eph. 4:12

Study for ministry 2 Tim. 2:15

Bear one another's burdens Gal. 6:2

B. Management steps

How will this ministry be managed?

This involves the practicalities of who will lead, what policies will be used, how the ministry is conducted, etc. (The detail of planning will depend on the size of the ministry....such as the following.)

Appointment of a director

The director can be one of the pastors or a layman who report to one of the staff. The director will be the primary one to work through this planning process, help conduct the training, recruit counselors, and manage the ministry.

Complete ministry organization worksheet

This worksheet addresses the issues of mutual expectations, roles, responsibilities, lines of accountability, conflict resolution, and the evaluation process. Clarify lines of accountability with the church leadership

Write a procedures manual.

This manual should include the counseling ,ministry's purpose and strategy, criteria for recruiting counselors, ethics, record keeping, forms, organization worksheet results (management arrangement), policies, internship and training guidelines etc. (GFI has samples)

3. Training (Based on the GFI Counseling Institute)

Introductory Christ-Centered Soul Care seminar is available (a half day event)

Exchanged Life Conference (online, DVD or live event)

Usually a Friday night and Saturday presentation of how to live victoriously in Christ

Exchanged Life Workshop

A three and one half day training event for those who know Christ as life and desire equipping for helping others appropriate Christ as their life. It includes teaching, video demonstration, role-playing, practice, and group discussion. Although this is an essential training step for counselors, everyone who attends this event will not necessarily be recruited for the formal church counseling ministry.

Solomon Online Lecture Series

This is an online module of 25 teaching sessions by 11 speakers with notes.

Recruit and train lay counselors

Although the ministry can begin with the director as the only counselor, there should be a process of facilitating the selection and training of others that are gifted, committed, trained, and approved for the counseling ministry.

Basic counseling skills training course: *How Can I Help* by Dr. Skip Hunt is an example of training available from another publisher. It could be used for about 14 hours of class time. This is a basic course that covers counseling skills, approaches to evangelism, helping someone through a crisis, and guiding a believer to resolve problems biblically.

Further goal-oriented equipping

Biblical counselors could be further equipped through the Certification track or the GFICI Courses.

Certification process is outlined at GFICounselingInstitute.com / Introduction / Certification

GFICI Diploma program has over 10 courses that are primarily online. (They can be taken for their individual value, even if the Diploma is not one's goal.) See [GFICounselingInstitute.com/ Courses / Diploma Courses](http://GFICounselingInstitute.com/Courses/DiplomaCourses).

Assemble counseling resource library

Materials are needed to equip counselors and guide counselees. These resources include books, cassette tapes, videos, and CDs. The topics include Exchanged Life teaching, marriage enrichment, parenting, financial management, career guidance, health issues, etc. See GFI Solomon Institute lecture: "Homework in Counseling" (Woodward)
Recommended: *Biblical Counseling Library* on CD-ROM - Hopefortheheart.org

4. Ministry

Counseling

Individual counselor(s) begin accepting appointments

Use office(s) designated for the counseling ministry.

Use intake forms.

Use library resources for homework.

Keep files of counselees.

Follow ethical guidelines.

Make referrals when necessary.

Report to supervisor as determined.

Promote ministry

Announce counseling ministry in the church bulletin.

Make and distribute business cards and flyer.

Supervise

Church leadership oversees ministry, make mid-course corrections, etc.

Continue training process

Counselors continue personal study, distance education, etc.

Evaluate

Use testimonies from counselees.

Reports from counselors are made and reviewed.

Role of Counseling Ministry Coach

Facilitate the pastoral leadership of the church in starting and developing an effective Exchanged Life Counseling ministry. (Contact GFI)

Dr. John Woodward

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