

PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN CARE & COUNSELING

WHY THE NEED FOR A CHRISTIAN CARE & COUNSELING MINISTRY?

All people are created in the image of God, yet broken by the ravages of sin committed both by and against us. We desperately need God's redeeming grace through Christ's work on the cross not only for our eternal salvation but also for living meaningful lives to the glory of God. The primary focus of Christian Care & Counseling is to expose hurting people to the healing power of the gospel (comfort) as well as to expose sinful patterns to biblical precepts so that God-honoring change can take place (admonition).

At Community Christian Alliance Church we desire to create an environment of transparency where individuals and families can share their struggles, hurts, and relational difficulties and where confession of sins can take place in safety and confidentiality. By fostering this culture of transparency we seek to prevent "explosive" situations that at times needlessly go beyond the point of no feasible return. Through prayer and modeling we ask God to reveal the secret corners of our hearts and through the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about change that honors Him.

CHRISTIAN CARE & COUNSELING AT COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE CHURCH

Christian Care & Counseling entails empathy, comfort, education, conviction, encouragement and when necessary warning and admonition. It is a gentle process forged by listening and building trust, by offering a safe environment for people to release emotional pain, and by applying biblical principles to spur change in people's hearts.

Christian Care & Counseling, then, is another tool through which the Holy Spirit works to heal past hurts, confront current sinful patterns, instruct how we are to live, and give meaning to our lives. The Christian Care & Counseling process is effective because it is personal, emotionally safe and confidential, and the results of its effectiveness are a blessing to the individual, family, church and the community.

BIBLICAL MANDATE

- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.
- Colossians 3:16
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom.
- Romans 15:14
I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY AND CHRISTIAN CARE & COUNSELING

At Community Christian Alliance Church we believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God given to man concerning faith and life, and that it relevantly speaks into the problems that human beings face. We also acknowledge that medical assistance, professional research and treatment methodologies not specifically found in the Bible may be helpful in identifying problems and applying appropriate interventions. We recognize the importance of the sinful human heart and the foundational nature of biblical anthropology in the counseling process while at the same time we benefit from the medical advances made in the study of the human brain and the brain's effects on thinking patterns as well as from social sciences studying human behavior. The principle of *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture Alone) refers to the sacred Scriptures as the ultimate standard by which all integrative aspects in Christian Care & Counseling must be evaluated.

All claims to truth and authority, whether from philosophy, science, or church leadership, are to be placed under the Bible's scrutiny for accurate evaluation. The Bible is the standard against which all claims of truth must be judged. Because of natural revelation the study of psychology, philosophy, and sciences can have a useful role but Scripture must be given authority over such findings and be the ultimate standard for determining truth. We believe that this approach is the most effective to adopt as we seek to provide spiritual direction and counsel to others.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN CARE & COUNSELING

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, male and female, and declared them "very good," granting them all the capacities of image bearers. God created them to reflect and to enjoy His glory. They were created material and immaterial, physical body and spiritual soul, these qualities united and inseparably interdependent. They were created with a conscience able to discern good and evil, with the capacity to relate, think, choose, and feel.

Scripture does not seek to simplify human nature or reduce humans to their most basic formative parts nor does it seek to precisely describe each component part. At Community Christian Alliance Church we believe the human beings are both material and immaterial, both physical and spiritual in nature. The Bible uses a wide array of terms to describe the multifaceted properties of human nature (soul, spirit, mind, heart, will, body, flesh, etc...). The practical consequence of these theological foundations in counseling is that people should be thought of and related to as a complex unity. Although we may speak of people in terms of their physical, cognitive, or psychological aspects for the purpose of discussion, no absolute division of the immaterial component is seen in the Bible. Consequently, instead of dealing with people in a compartmentalized way, we must seek to care for the whole person and recognize the interrelatedness of the physical and spiritual.

At Community Christian Alliance Church we also recognize the complexity of human beings and affirm that no single theory of human development or behavior (cognitive, behavioral, emotional, etc...) could serve to fully explain people. Thus, we recognize that what is physical can and does affect that which is spiritual and that which is spiritual can and does affect that which is physical. We do not depreciate any aspect of human nature nor minimize the importance of human emotion, the human body, or the human intellect. In the counseling process we recognize that the fall of Adam adversely affected all subsequent human beings holistically, both physically and spiritually.

SIN AND CHRISTIAN CARE & COUNSELING

We believe that because of their voluntary sin against God, Adam and Eve fell from the actively good, sinless, and innocent state in which they were first created. They became rebellious and transgressive against God and each other. Immediately they died spiritually and also began to die physically. Consequently, for them and all their progeny, the image of God was distorted and their nature depraved and corrupted in every aspect of their being (spiritually, socially, mentally, volitionally, and emotionally). While humans are corrupted in every aspect of their being because of God's common grace, the image of God has not been totally eradicated and evil is not given full reign. All people have true dignity, a conscience in which clarity coexists with distortion, and many powers of mind, action, and feeling. All humanity is separated and alienated from God and thus spiritually dead until God's

own gracious intervention. The supreme need of all human beings is to be reconciled to God and the only hope of all human beings is to receive the undeserved grace of God in Christ. God alone can rescue us and eternally restore us, sinners to Himself.

Starting with Adam's fall, sin has permeated and affected every facet of human activities and experiences. As fallen beings we experience the consequences of our own sins, the hurt of sins committed against us, and the general suffering that is part of a fallen creation. The care and counseling process will take into consideration how these various scenarios affect the counseling approach and will focus on personal moral responsibility, biblical repentance, forgiveness, healing of personal hurts and the restoration of healthy relationships. In the counseling process, individuals will be encouraged to move toward dependence on and obedience to God through the process of repentance, who alone can provide the grace necessary to negotiate such sin and suffering.

SALVATION AND CHRISTIAN CARE & COUNSELING

At Community Christian Alliance Church we recognize that true fulfillment can be found only through an authentic relationship with Jesus Christ. As such, our purpose in counseling is not only to help individuals and families with their relational struggles but to also point out to them their need for salvation in Jesus Christ. We believe that the salvation of people from eternal condemnation in hell is accomplished by faith in Jesus Christ through God's grace. In light of humankind's depraved morality and spiritual bankruptcy we believe that God takes the initiative in our salvation and draws us unto himself by granting us the gift of faith. The human response to God's gift of faith is a submission of the will to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and a commitment to live a life in accordance with God's righteous standards.

Since salvation is God's initiative, we realize that God's timing in drawing people to Himself can vary. For most, salvation is a process that entails understanding the facts of the gospel, being exposed to Christian living through relationships with other Christians, and making a commitment to follow Jesus Christ. Since salvation is a gift of God, Christian Care & Counseling should not be contingent upon people's profession of faith or immediate acceptance of the Gospel message. Spiritually caring for people and counseling them in their struggles are not substitutes for the gospel message nor are they intended to provide the counsees with a false sense of assurance and spiritual wellbeing. Instead, Christian Care & Counseling are tools intended to meet the immediate real needs of unbelievers and are an expression of believers' love for a hurting world. The process of counseling or spiritually caring for unbelievers is contingent upon the counselee's acceptance that our counseling is based upon Scriptural principles and Christian morality. In the case of believers, counseling is a focused and personalized extension of Christian discipleship in which believers are called to live out worthily of the Lord and grow in their obedience to Christ. In the counseling process we come alongside believers

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and spur them on to progressive sanctification and Christ-likeness giving attention to both their inward attitudes and associated outward actions. Their transformed lives will be manifested in Spiritual fruit.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Our approach to counseling is Christian and biblical in nature. We seek to disciple and help people with their personal and relational matters from a spiritual perspective guided by biblical principles. Our counselors are not trained, authorized, or licensed to provide professional counseling, psychological treatment, or psychological diagnosis. When a licensed mental health professional volunteers in the Christian Care & Counseling ministry, he or she will not do so as a licensed counselor. Each individual seeking spiritual counseling from Community Christian Alliance Church is free to seek such additional assistance through professional counseling and therapy. There are no fees required for Community Christian Alliance Church's counseling ministry.