

Soul Care

A Ministry of Salem Baptist Church

Fredericksburg, Virginia

Overview of Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling: What is Soul Care?

Soul Care is Salem Baptist Church's ministry effort to provide solution-focused counseling consistent with the Great Commission of *Matthew 28: 18-20* and *2 Corinthians 1: 3-5* and *Hebrews 4:14-16*. God has called each of us to have a relationship with Him; He has also called us to reach out to others, whatever their needs.

Soul Care is compassionate, loving care given to someone suffering from sorrow, pain, and the tribulations and difficulties of living in a fallen world. Our ministry goals are addressed in *Ephesians 4:1* through *5:2* and essentially focuses on helping others develop the character of Jesus Christ in their lives. Modern research is confirming what the Scriptures revealed thousands of years ago that it is the person and the character of the helper, not the technique or model of counseling that is the more crucial variable for counseling success. We assert that Helper is the Holy Spirit of God.

Our motivation is rooted in compassion for others. It allows us, beyond mere intellectual understanding, to feel the struggles of others – to mourn when they mourn and rejoice when they rejoice. Compassion allows us to draw near to one another in trust.

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy / Pastoral Counseling

We believe everyone occasionally needs help to get their life refocused and back on track. Further, we believe a limited number counseling sessions (usually 5 to 6) are sufficient to accomplish desired and specific goals. Sessions will focus on developing solutions to facilitate forward progress and growth rather than dwelling on non-productive issues. To facilitate the counseling process personality, spiritual, or other assessments may be used, and homework assignments made. Solution-Focused Brief Therapy / Pastoral Counseling are designed to:

- help you tell your story honestly, in a safe and understanding environment, and then accurately define with you the problem(s) to be addressed;
- help you set clear goals for changes that reflect godly values, that give you a future and a hope, that are owned by you, and doable with the resources available;
- help connect you to additional resources through referral to other ministries, (e.g., a small group of like-minded believers) for support and encouragement, or referral for medical or other counseling services;
- guide you into study of the Scriptures so that both the goals and the ways to achieve them are biblically sound; and
- help you translate change into principles for lifelong learning and living; leaving you able to continue growth after counseling is terminated.

Holy Spirit's Power

True Christian counseling always has an invisible partner present – the Holy Spirit. His presence can help resolve any quandary, break through any difficulty, and overcome any fear. We must tune our inner ear to hear the voice of the Spirit. A properly tuned ear will hear the pacing instructions of the Spirit – when to slow down and linger, and when to forge ahead and confront something with boldness.

God is actively at work in the world and in our lives through His Holy Spirit. He has equipped each of us with Himself and will provide insight into the activities needed to find exceptions and create solutions. As we seek His perspective He will help us focus on positive goals and outcomes. Therefore, we learn to rely on Him and the Spirit He gave us.

Body Life

In the body of believers, the church there is strength we do not have, wisdom we have not attained, support we cannot give to ourselves, discipline we have yet to grow into, and mercy beyond all that any one person can know or give. When we mourn that weight is shared throughout the body, and when we rejoice, that power is multiplied throughout the body. Our undeniable interconnectedness is one big reason why we have a soul care ministry at all.

The body of Christ, His church will also help set and maintain clear limits – respecting the limits of our time, energy, knowledge, and skill. The church – especially in times of difficulty – is uniquely equipped by God for works of supporting and encouraging others through regular prayer petitions, authentic fellowship and friendships. The body also includes other helpers who are more experienced or more easily connectable to specific needs, issues, or resources.

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Jesus Christ Our Model

The very best model of healthy living is Jesus Himself. He was compassionate with others. He challenged false beliefs and dark thoughts with His knowledge of the truth. He skillfully gave people life-changing hope. He promised rest and peace through the Holy Spirit. He was the model of ethical integrity. He got others (who would be part of His body) involved in His ministry to others.

It is our firm belief that:

1. All people are created in the image of God and, as His imager bearers, have infinite value and worth (Gen.1:26, 27).
2. Scripture is the only reliable source for faith and practice (see Tim. 3:16-17).
3. All people have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).
4. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).
5. The message and methods of counseling must be based upon the finished work of Christ (see Col.1:27-2:10).
6. We rely totally on the present ministry of the Holy Spirit (see John 16:7-15).
7. Counseling is limited by the faith response of the counselee (see Gal.3:1-5).

We all need the support of the Christian community and we all need to renew our faith and walk with God (see Heb.10:17-25).

Ethical Foundations

- Jesus Christ is the pre-eminent model for Pastoral Counseling practice, ethics, and care ministry.
- Pastoral Counseling maintains a committed, intimate relationship with the body of Christ (the church), individual counselors, and with a local body of believers.
- Pastoral Counseling is a Spirit-led process of change and growth, geared to help others pursue the imitation of Christ through the skillful synthesis of bio-psycho-social-spiritual interventions.
- Pastoral Counselors are dedicated to excellence in client service, ethical integrity in practice, and respect for others.
- Pastoral Counselors accord the highest respect to the Biblical revelation regarding human life, personhood, and the family.
- The Biblical and constitutional rights to free speech and religious freedom, protects Pastoral Counselors' public identity and the explicit incorporation of spiritual practices in counseling.

Pastoral Counselors are mindful of their representation of Christ and His church and are dedicated to honor their commitment and obligation in all social and professional relations.

Ethical Guidelines

1. Above all else, do no harm. Exercise all diligence to protect the rights and dignity of those you counsel.
2. Take special diligence to ensure client confidentiality and client-informed consent.
3. Honor the call to competent Christian counseling through proper education and training; knowing your professional and skill limitations; take measures to assure proper consultation and referral.
4. Avoid dual role relationships.
5. Avoid romantic or sexual intimacies in counseling. Remain in relationships of personal accountability.