

The ministers / staff of Carbondale Church of Christ are available to take a limited number of counseling / coaching cases under the following conditions.

**(1) Our Framework** – The counseling / coaching provided is based on scriptural and theological foundations. While some members of the ministerial staff may be trained in counseling / coaching disciplines, unless specifically mentioned, they are NOT licensed to perform psychological counseling, marriage and family therapy, professional counseling or as mental health professionals in Illinois.

**(2) Our Focus** – Our primary focus is to strengthen the spiritual relationship between God and the individual in order to foster spiritual growth. We recognize that growing spiritually often involves dealing with emotional, behavioral, and relational concerns. As needed, these issues will be approached as spiritual concerns. Our primary role is to provide a safe and confidential atmosphere to discuss issues of a personal nature and to walk alongside you providing support, encouragement, and scriptural perspectives. If you should have specific legal, financial, medical, psychological concerns you should seek advice from an appropriate independent professional.

**(3) Non-Members** – Because we respect the shepherding responsibility of the ministerial staff over their own congregations (Heb 13:17), we prefer for members of other churches to seek counseling at their own church. If you do not want to seek counseling at your own church, come talk to us.

**(4) Limited Duration** – The counseling / coaching is provided on an as-needed basis and limited to **six sessions** per calendar year per person, unless specifically approved by the elders.

**(5) Our (and Your) Prerogative** – At any time during the counseling / coaching, for reason(s) sufficient to him/her, the ministerial staff, or counselee, shall have the option of terminating scheduled sessions.

**(6) Confidentiality** – All counseling / coaching sessions administered by a minister / staff are conducted within their professional capacity as clergy. All communications, verbal or written, made by and/or received by the ministerial staff during said sessions shall be confidential and privileged. Both the ministerial staff and the counselee shall have the privilege to refuse to disclose said communications and to prevent another from disclosing same to a third party to the extent that said refusal is not contrary to Scripture (Mt. 18:15ff) or law (criminal reporting mandates, etc.). Ministerial staff are required by law to disclose information to appropriate authorities under the following conditions:

- Members of clergy are **required** to report suspected child (under age 18) maltreatment immediately when they have “**reasonable cause to believe**” that a child known to them in their professional or official capacity may be an abused or neglected child”. (ANCRA Sec.4) This is done by calling the DCFS Hotline at **1-800-252-2873** or **1-800-25ABUSE**.
- Reason to believe that an eligible adult (over age 60), who because of dysfunction is unable to seek assistance for himself or herself, has, within the previous 12 months, been subjected to abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation. Reports are directed to the Department on Aging of the State of Illinois, through a 24-hour Elder Abuse Hotline (1-866-800-1409).
- When there is risk of imminent danger to the counselee or to another person, the ministerial staff is ethically bound to take necessary steps to prevent such danger.
- When a valid court order is issued for records, the ministerial staff and the church are bound by law to comply with such requests.

**(6) Mediation** – On *rare* occasions a conflict may develop between the ministerial staff and a counselee. In order to make sure that any such conflicts will be resolved in a biblically faithful manner, we require all of our counsees to agree that any dispute that arises with a counselor or with this church as a result of counseling / coaching will be mediated by the Elders of Carbondale Church of Christ.

Having clarified the principles and policies of our counseling ministry, we welcome the opportunity to minister to you in the name of Christ and to be used by Him as He helps you to grow in spiritual maturity and prepares you for usefulness in His body. If you have any questions, please talk to a counselor. If these guidelines are acceptable to you, please sign below.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_