

Christ-based ministries attempt to make a difference in the lives of the people it is responsible to serve.

As local ministries perform the responsibilities of the Great Commission, it is important for every believer to recognize spiritual, social, and legal limits, which shape the scope of the Church's mission.

### **The Priority Mission**

We must never lose focus of our priority mission to make disciples. This includes sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our community and abroad, bringing people to a point of decision concerning our Lord, and equipping believers for their participation in kingdom building (Matt. 28:18-20).

Unfortunately, the mission is not without serious challenges and opposition diabolically designed to destroy the efforts of the local church.

Therefore, precautionary measures are taken due to risks and vulnerabilities. Ministry leadership must conscientiously weigh these risks, while balancing spiritual mandates with social and legal considerations.

Stated plainly, the objective is to provide ministry-related services

without violating spiritual principles, and civil or criminal laws. Therefore, this brief is provided to help you determine whether the care ministries of this church can assist you with the need you have beyond the Priority Mission of this church.

### **Issues to Consider**

Confidentiality: Whenever you have a personal matter, which is shared with a pastor, deacon, or officer of the local body, it is a general practice to keep your specific concern confidential.

However, if the matter affects other persons in the local body, or it is a matter where there is potential harm, danger, or property damage, confidentiality gives way to a higher spiritual or legal standard. This standard is called the "Duty of Care."

Duty of Care: While the clergy/member protection from disclosure of confidential information is extremely powerful, there are spiritual and legal limits to such protection. Generally, courts cannot compel members of clergy including Christ-based counselors and other ministers to disclose issues stated in confidence. However, there are exceptions to such protections.

Spiritual Exceptions: Interpersonal disputes or similar matters affecting two or more persons in the local body are not matters, which can be held in strict confidence. This would be in violation of Scripture requiring the parties to meet and resolve such issues, or bring a decision before the church (Matt. 18:15-18).

Lawful Exceptions: Acts which constitute violation of criminal or civil laws may also fall into this category. As an example, disclosures of child abuse must be reported. There are no protections for attorneys or members of clergy. There's a ten-year statute of limitations on such issues with jail time and/or a fine for refusing to report such incidents. (This differs by state).

Another example is matters involving spousal assaults. Spousal assaults are a violation of spiritual principles and criminal law.

Persons in the care ministries of any local church cannot appear to condone, minimize, or ignore such conduct.

These and similar issues make the care ministries of the local church, and particularly ministers and officers vulnerable to abuses, falsehoods, and other forms of deception. Therefore, prayer, extensive inquiry, consultation, and extended time may be required to

consider issues subject to the care ministries of the local church.

### **Prodigal Implications**

Finally, it is without question that persons in the local body encounter difficulty. This may involve family, finances, health or any other area of life. The "duty" of the fellowship is to help these persons. However, the type of help or assistance may not be obvious. On occasion, persons providing care must attempt to determine the "spiritual" cause for such experiences. Persons providing such care must be extremely careful not to enable or otherwise support sinful habits, inappropriate lifestyles, criminal behavior, and related patterns of disobedience.

The adverse results of such decisions encountered by a believer are designed to correct the behavior and produce righteousness (Hebrews 12:5-13).

If the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son would have sent support to his "wayward" son in the foreign land, the son would have never recognized the depth of his sin (Luke 15: 11-24).

Therefore, the most effective approach in the care ministry may be to merely provide prayer support, fellowship, and spiritual guidance.

Christ-based ministries desire to be effective and responsive to individual believers within the scope of the Priority Mission.

Any and all assistance is provided with the hope that individual members will become fully involved in the **Priority Mission** of the Church. Any assistance provided without this objective is an act of humanism, and it completely misses the mark (i.e., sin).

### **Decision Block**

I have read, accept and understand this briefing without coercion, intimidation, interference, threat or any other form of manipulation. I am an adult, and I am legally responsible for personal decisions based on my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If Minor (Parental or Guardian signature):

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Understanding the Care Ministries of the Local and National Christ-based Ministry



*Be my Rock of Refuge,  
to which I can always go;  
give the command  
to save me,  
for You are my  
Rock and my Fortress.*

*Psalm 71:3*

**"Wise as serpents,  
harmless as doves."**

**Matt. 10:16**



There is at a minimum an initial report, and a concluding report to officially close the counseling. If counseling is long term, reports are written every fourth session.

Counseling Service Disclaimer:

This counseling program only provides Biblically based counseling to persons who are "born-again" or expressing a desire to be "born-again." Persons participating as counselees and counselors in the program must sign and concur with a written agreement expressing their willingness to be involved in such counseling, and indemnifying the church from any unforeseen results. Counselees further admit that they make no choices other than those, which evolve from their personal faith and sense of commitment.

Counseling Appointments call:

Church office: (972) 221 5668

Dr. Davidson: (214) 284 4599

"We believe that this ministry will be a major asset to Westside, and important support for you and your family."

Kenneth W. Blake, Pastor

## **Operation Master's Hand**

**And He sent them out to  
proclaim the kingdom of  
God, and to perform  
healing. Lk. 9:2**

**The Counseling Program  
of  
Westside Baptist Church  
802 Bellaire  
Lewisville, Texas 75067**

**There is one who speaks  
rashly like the thrusts of a  
sword, But the tongue of the  
wise brings healing.  
Pro. 12:18**