



# **SALEM** HEIGHTS

## BIBLICAL COUNSELING

**SALEM HEIGHTS CHURCH**  
**Biblical Counseling Ministry**

**Counselor Handbook**

**2025**

[www.shccounseling.org](http://www.shccounseling.org)



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## MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

**Our mission** is to provide short term, targeted, biblical counsel for life's struggles to people from Salem Heights Church and its community.

**Our goal** in counseling is to make the gospel relevant by connecting the members in our community to the life-transforming power of Jesus Christ. We are confident that through the Scriptures and the power of His Spirit, God has given us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3-4).

**Our vision** for counseling is short-term biblical care and help in life's transitions. We see counseling happening over 2-10 sessions in a period of 2-3 months (in most cases). Our desire is to help the counselee glorify God in their thoughts, words, and actions as they walk through life and interact with others.

**Our commitment** as a church is to offer free counseling services to church members and those in the local community.

**We believe** in the life-changing power of Jesus Christ through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the instruction of God's Word. As a result, counseling will be biblical counseling in which the Scriptures are held as the final authority in all matters.

**We provide care** for anxiety, depression, anger, stress, abuse, conflict, idleness, addictions, grief, marriage reconciliation, pre-marital, parenting, and more. We primarily work with individuals over 13 years old and couples.

## **AFFIRMATIONS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING**

- 1. Biblical Counseling Is Centered on Christ**
- 2. Biblical Counseling Is Rooted in Scripture**
- 3. Biblical Counseling Is Grounded in Theology**
- 4. Biblical Counseling Is Dependent upon the Holy Spirit**
- 5. Biblical Counseling Is Focused on Sanctification**
- 6. Biblical Counseling Is Embedded in the Church**
- 7. Biblical Counseling Is Founded in Love**
- 8. Biblical Counseling Is Attentive to Issues of the Heart**
- 9. Biblical Counseling Is Comprehensive in Understanding**
- 10. Biblical Counseling Is Thorough in Care**
- 11. Biblical Counseling Is Relevant in Methodology**
- 12. Biblical Counseling Is Missional in Orientation**

\*These statements are from the Biblical Counseling Coalition and can be found with more detail at:  
<https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/confessional-statement/>

## COUNSELING MINISTRY PROCEDURES

### **Our Role:**

We believe in the ability of those in the body of Christ to come alongside one another. Small group leaders, youth leaders, children's ministry servants and mentors can effectively care for others and minister the Word of God. Biblical counselors have received additional training to care for those in crisis. Our ministry desires to be a support to the other ministries of SHC and our community in caring for people. We do not believe we are the only resource for believers that are struggling.

### **Intake Process:**

New counselees should be directed to our website at [www.shccounseling.org](http://www.shccounseling.org) to fill out a request for counseling. There is also a link at the Salem Heights Church website. After we receive the request, we will call to schedule an initial intake appointment.

Most new counselees will be scheduled for an intake appointment with one of our intake counselors. This will allow the person to be seen more quickly and begin the journey for counseling. It also enables better placement with more information.

During an intake appointment, the informed consent and basics of biblical counseling are discussed. A report is generated about the counselee and given to the intake team to consider placement with a counselor.

### **New Counselees:**

A counselor is assigned a new counselee by receiving communication from a ministry assistant. Once the ministry assistant has scheduled the first appointment, the counselor will have access to the client's intake form and report in TheraNest. If the counselee was directly assigned to a counselor without an Intake Appointment and Report, the counselor will be responsible for going over the informed consent as part of the first appointment.

Please review both the intake form and report to prepare for your first session. Contact a counseling ministry leader if you have questions before you meet with a new counselee. We are here to help!

### **Advocates:**

Each counselee is encouraged to bring an advocate with them to their appointments. An advocate is a godly friend, mentor or family member who will attend their sessions, complete the homework, pray for them, and provide encouragement and reminders throughout the week of what they are learning in their sessions.

### **Availability:**

Please keep your availability current with the counseling ministry assistant. We will schedule new counselees based on your availability and may not have a personal conversation about each new counselee.

### **Scheduling Appointments:**

All counselors will have access to an account on TheraNest for the purpose of scheduling their own appointments. TheraNest can be used on a computer or phone. After the first appointment, counselors are responsible for scheduling future appointments. Appointments should only be scheduled within a counselor's communicated availability. If you need to schedule outside of your normal counseling hours, please check with a ministry assistant to make sure there is a room available.

**Counseling Rooms:**

Counseling rooms are in the hallway next to the chapel and in the modular (Rooms 213, 212, 209A, 208, Modular 1 and Modular 3). At times we might use a ministry leader's office or the Green Room. Rooms will be assigned for use by the Counseling Ministry Assistant. Please check in with the ministry assistant (daytime) or the building host (evening) to confirm room use.

**Resources:**

Resources to give to counselees are in Room 207. You do not need to charge for resources. Please let the counseling ministry assistant know if you have taken the last copy of a particular resource so it can be reordered. If you would like to check out a resource on a subject, there is a counselor library in Room 213. If you would like to request additional materials for a client, please email [counseling@salemheightschurch.com](mailto:counseling@salemheightschurch.com) for approval.

**Counseling Sessions:**

- Sessions are to be conducted with the same gender. If possible, couples will counsel couples. If it's necessary to meet with an additional family member, let a counseling ministry leader know.
- To fulfill new counseling requests, we practice a short-term model. Counseling encompasses 2-10 sessions during a 2-3 month period, depending on need. Check in with a counseling ministry leader if you need a longer period.
- Sessions should be 50 minutes unless you have asked for more time. Be aware the room might be used by another person as soon as your session is finished.
- Sessions are to be held in the counseling rooms. You can also utilize "Zoom" within your home in a private and non-distracting setting by wearing headphones so no one within the home hears communication.

**Notes and Records:**

- Please maintain confidentiality with making notes and keeping records. You may keep notes for yourself for consistency of care in whatever way works best for you. TheraNest has note-taking features that may be utilized. OneNote, an Outlook note-taking program, is another option you may find useful.
- Counseling ministry assistants will create an electronic file for each counselee. This file will include the intake form, intake report, notes about scheduling and the end of care summary from you. If you have anything you would like to add to the file, please email the information in a word document to [counseling@salemheightschurch.org](mailto:counseling@salemheightschurch.org).

**Communication with Counselees:**

All counselors will receive access to a Salem Heights Church email. We encourage you to use your [salemheightschurch.org](mailto:salemheightschurch.org) email address to communicate with counselees, rather than giving out your personal phone number. Remind your counselees that you are not available for emergencies and if necessary, give any resources to seek emergency help (See Appendix E). For exceptions, please feel free to reach out to a ministry director.

**Ending Counseling:**

When you are finished with a counselee, please let the counseling ministry assistant know and submit the End of Care Summary. The End of Care Summary is available on the counselor resource page of our website under SHC Counseling Forms. Completion of the summary completes the file for the counselee, and the file will be electronically archived. An end of counseling survey will be sent to the counselee.

**Making Referrals:**

We believe in biblical counseling and the future support of the body of Christ once counseling is completed. However, in the case that progress is not being made, or because of a conflict of interest, or for medical concerns, we do make referrals. We will work with permission from the counselee and a family physician and/or mental health professional to seek care if needed. If needed, obtain a Release of Information form (Appendix D) to exchange information with a health professional.

**Mandatory Reporting:** Biblical counselors at Salem Heights Church are considered mandatory reporters by the State of Oregon. We will provide yearly mandatory reporter training. For more information about mandatory reporting, see Appendix C.

**Process for joining the team:**

Most biblical counselors at SHC have gone through the Equipped to Counsel (ETC) Training Program. This is not a requirement; however, it does help build a foundation for counseling and create a common counseling language amongst the team. Certification is also not required to do biblical counseling at SHC.

Not everyone who completes ETC will serve as a formal biblical counselor. Many will use these tools in various church ministries and one another care. Some may find a better fit through advocacy and/or mentoring. Finding the best fit for a person will be prayerfully sought through counseling leadership.

Persons identified or expressing interest in joining the counseling team can begin the process by filling out the Ministry Interest Form and meeting with the Director of Counseling Care. A background check and Counseling Observer Agreement must be completed (Appendix A and B). After a process of observing counseling appointments, communication with the Directors of Counseling Care and participating in counseling team meetings, a formal counseling application form will be submitted. Upon approval from Pastor Pete and the counseling leadership team, the new team member will co-counsel with another counselor and then move into solo counseling with one client at a time. New counselors will receive ongoing supervision from the Directors of Counseling Care.

**Observers/Trainees:**

As we are a training ministry, at any time there might be an observer or trainee in a counseling session. This is indicated on our intake form. Observers are to join the session as an engaged care person in the room and will participate as directed by the counselor. See Appendix B for the Counseling Observer Agreement.

**Mentor Counselors:**

All new counselors are assigned a mentor counselor to case consult between sessions. It is the responsibility of the counselor to reach out to their mentor counselor between each session to obtain direction and confirmation. Occasionally, the mentor counselor may come to observe a session.

**Counselor Growth and Observation:**

Counselors are committed to learning and growing both spiritually and in practice. We are committed as counseling leadership to on-going training and encouragement. At times a counseling ministry leader will observe a counselor or ask for a recorded session. This is to continue to facilitate the growth and development of our counselors.



**Equip and Encourage Meetings:**

Once a month, counselors meet together for equipping and encouragement. These meetings provide on-going training for our team and give us time to check in, pray, and case consult. We are asking all on our team to commit to attending these monthly meetings.

*I have read and understand our Mission and Vision Statements, Affirmations of Biblical Counseling, and Counseling Ministry Procedures.*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## ATTRIBUTES FOR BIBLICAL COUNSELORS

As a Salem Heights Church biblical counselor, you have been called and equipped by God to counsel those impacted by their own sin or the sin of others. As a result, it is important that we guard against anything that would diminish our personal ability to correctly teach the Word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). The following are ten attributes that each Biblical counselor should seek to live out in their everyday lives as they prepare to counsel others.

1. I believe that God's Word, as revealed through the Old and New Testament, is authoritatively sufficient for life and practice, and that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation.
2. I faithfully study God's Word to continue growing in my knowledge and grace of God.
3. I am thoughtful, prayerful, and biblical in my preparation for each counseling session.
4. I am diligent to apply God's Word and proclaim the implications of the gospel in my own life and in my counseling sessions.
5. I pray before, during, and after my sessions to ensure my reliance on the Holy Spirit and for the hearts and minds of my counselees.
6. I seek to be above reproach both in my public and private life and abstain from words and actions that are sinful or could diminish my testimony, become a stumbling block for my counselee, or hinder my sole dependence on the Spirit of God.
7. I am committed to regular participation in a local church, attending Sunday services and participating in other areas of body life (i.e., Men's and Women's Discipleship or small groups).
8. I am quick to reach out for help when I need guidance or direction for a case or if I need counsel for my own sufferings, trials, and hardships.
9. I am committed to ongoing development as a counselor and participation in monthly Equip and Encourage meetings and trainings.
10. I understand that I am part of a team and seek to consistently contribute to the unity of our counseling team.

*I have read the Attributes of a Biblical Counselor and understand that as a member of the counseling ministry, they serve as a standard for serving as a Biblical Counselor at Salem Heights Church.*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## COUNSELOR CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Confidentiality is an important aspect of the counseling process. All counselees sign an intake agreement stating they understand confidentiality. A copy of our Intake Form is in Appendix F. We carefully guard the information entrusted to us. As a church-based counseling ministry, we do not offer absolute confidentiality. There are times when it may be necessary for us to share specific information with others. Examples include but are not limited to matters of church discipline (cf. Matt. 18:15 ff.) which may include the pastor/elder of the counselee's attending church, criminal activities, and potential harm to self or others. Additionally, when a counselor is uncertain how to address a particular situation, the counselor may consult with another member of the Biblical Counseling Ministry team at Salem Heights Church for the purpose of providing the highest level of care within the ministries of the church.

There are times when counseling information may be shared outside the church context. Those exceptions would include, but are not limited to the following:

- known or suspected abuse of any kind (abuse of a minor will be mandatory reported – See Appendix C).
- the intent to take criminal actions or violence against another person
- credible suicidal thoughts or intentions

In the case of marriage or family counseling, there is limited confidentiality, meaning the confidentiality belongs to the couple and not the individual.

Confidentiality for counseling at Salem Heights Church is defined by pastor-parishioner privilege because we are a local church, and our counselors operate as agents of the church (pastors/ministers), not agents of the state (licensed counselors). This means counseling conversations are inadmissible in the court of law. All counseling forms and notes taken by the counselor are the property of Salem Heights Church Biblical Counseling Ministries. They are protected as confidential and may not be used in court proceedings or in any other way that is not authorized by the Biblical Counseling Ministry Team. If counseling needs require professional representation in a court setting by a counselor, Salem Heights Church Biblical Counseling will likely not be the best fit.

*This is to certify that I, \_\_\_\_\_, an employee, apprentice, trainee, or lay counselor, understand that any information (written, verbal or other form) obtained during the performance of my duties must remain confidential. This includes all information about members, counselees, families, employees, and other associate organizations, as well as any other information otherwise marked or known to be confidential.*

*I have read, understand, and agree to the Counselor Confidentiality Agreement and will seek to honor the protocol listed. I understand what it means to be a mandatory reporter.*

*I understand that any unauthorized release or carelessness in the handling of this confidential information is considered a breach of the duty to maintain confidentiality. I further understand that any breach of the duty to maintain confidentiality could be grounds for immediate dismissal from the ministry.*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix A – BACKGROUND CHECK

The responses I have provided in completing this form are complete, truthful, and accurate.

I hereby authorize Salem Heights Church to make inquiries concerning my background in connection with evaluating the information I provided on this form, including a criminal record check if deemed necessary by Salem Heights Church. I hereby authorize all persons associated with me, including churches, employers, law enforcement, licensing, and social services agencies, to release any information contained in their files or records concerning me to Salem Heights Church and its representatives.

In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of the information provided on this form to Salem Heights Church, I hereby release Salem Heights Church, their directors, employees, agents, representatives, and any other person or organization, including record custodians, that may release information concerning me, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs or family on account of inquiries concerning my background and any disclosures of information concerning me to Salem Heights Church. I waive any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me in this consent form.

Full legal name \_\_\_\_\_ Maiden name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address (for office use only) \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License # \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent or guardian if applicant is a minor \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B – COUNSELING OBSERVER AGREEMENT

All potential team members will be expected to participate in observation as part of their training. We have counseling at all different hours of the day and evenings. It is our hope that all in training will choose to observe a variety of different counselors in order to gain a perspective on different styles and situations in the counseling setting.

As counselors, we adhere to high confidentiality standards. We ensure deep trust to our counselees as we walk through many highly serious and emotionally trying circumstances. As an observer, we expect that you hold to our confidentiality agreement as you listen in a session. Below is our confidentiality statement:

Confidentiality is an important aspect of the counseling process. We carefully guard the information you entrust to us to the fullest extent possible. As a church-based counseling ministry, we do not offer absolute confidentiality. There are times when it may be necessary for us to share specific information with others. Examples include but are not limited to matters of church discipline (cf. Matt. 18:15 ff.) which may include the pastor/elder of counselee's attending church, criminal activities, and potential harm to self or others. Additionally, when a counselor is uncertain how to address a particular situation, the counselor may consult with another member of the Biblical Counseling Ministry team at Salem Heights Church for the purpose of providing the highest level of care within the ministries of the church. To best care for you, we will work together as a ministry team while keeping the circle of confidentiality as tight as possible.

**We also ask that observers only participate in the session as directed by the counselor and mostly act as a quiet observer.**

*I have read and understand the counseling observation agreement and will comply with the confidentiality and trainee participation statement.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C – MANDATORY REPORTER INFORMATION

### **Biblical counselors at Salem Heights Church are considered mandatory reporters by the State of Oregon. We will provide yearly mandatory reporter training.**

- Oregon law requires that any person suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected must immediately make a report. If there is an emergency, call 911 and then call the reporting hotline at 1-855-503-SAFE (1-855-503-7233).
- You are protected by law from liability when you make a report or provide information in good faith during a DHS investigation.

### **Reportable Abuse Toward Children**

- **Physical Abuse** is physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child. The physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) can result from punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, throwing, stabbing, hitting, burning, choking, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.
- **Neglect** is failure to provide for a child's basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.
- **Sexual Abuse** includes fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornographic materials.
- **Emotional Abuse** is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. It includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, belittling, and rejecting treatment for a child.

### **How to Report**

1. Call 1-855-503-SAFE (1-855-503-7233) to do your report.

If possible, have the following information:

- Names and addresses of the child and parent
  - The child's age
  - The type and extent of abuse, as well as any previous evidence of abuse
  - The explanation given for the abuse
  - Any other information that will help establish the cause of abuse or identify the abuser
  - Whether the child has Native American or Alaska Native heritage
  - If there are cultural or language considerations, and
  - A description of the child's disability or any special needs.
2. Let one of the Directors of Counseling Care know you have made a report.

**Appendix D – REFERRALS**

**Release of Information**

**Salem Heights Church Biblical Counseling Ministries**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to share and  
(Counselee’s Name) (Counselor’s Name)

exchange information with other staff at \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Facility or Organization)

for the purpose of providing assistance to me. \_\_\_\_\_ (Initial)

I confirm that \_\_\_\_\_ has explained the purpose of this form to me,

and I understand its content. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix E – COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

### **Child Abuse**

Mandatory Reporter Hotline  
1-855-503-SAFE (1-855-503-7233)

Liberty House (Salem)  
503-540-0288  
[www.libertyhousecenter.org](http://www.libertyhousecenter.org)

### **Suicide**

Marion County Emergency  
911

Marion County Non-Emergency Safety Check  
503-588-5032

Suicide Hotline  
1-800-273-8255

Psychiatric Crisis Center (PCC) – Salem Hospital  
503-585-4949

### **Domestic Abuse**

National Domestic Abuse Hotline  
1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)  
[www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)

Center for Hope and Safety (Salem)  
503-399-7722  
[hopeandsafety.org](http://hopeandsafety.org)

Called to Peace Ministries  
[www.calledtopeace.org](http://www.calledtopeace.org)

### **Addiction Resources**

Bridgeway  
Main: 503-363-2021  
Detox: 503-399-5597  
<https://bridgewayrecovery.com>

Most Excellent Way (Salem Heights Church)  
503-588-0403  
[www.salemheightschurch.org/ministries/the-most-excellent-way](http://www.salemheightschurch.org/ministries/the-most-excellent-way)



## **Appendix F – INTAKE FORM (Informed consent signed by the counselee)**

**This is a sample copy of our intake form. The most current form can be found at [www.shccounseling.org/counseling](http://www.shccounseling.org/counseling). Click on “Online Form” or “Download PDF.”**

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the Biblical Counseling Ministry of Salem Heights Church. We are grateful that you are inviting us into your life at this time. It is never easy to ask for help. We admire the courage, faith, and humility this first step represents on your part. It is our prayer that God will bless this step and use our time together to build more hope and direction into your life.

Our goal in the counseling ministry is to make the Gospel paramount by connecting our members and our community friends to the life-transforming power of Jesus Christ. We are confident that through the Scriptures and the power of His Spirit, God has given us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3-4). It is our joy to help real people with real problems using the Bible.

Our commitment as a church is to offer counseling services to church members and those in the local community. As a church, we are committed to help others glorify God with their thoughts, words, and actions through the community of faith. This is made possible by the redemptive power of Jesus Christ, the conviction and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the instruction of God’s Word. Your counseling will be biblical, pastoral counseling in which the Scriptures are held as the final authority in all matters. If you are not sure that you will be interested in biblical counseling, you will have the option of attending one or two sessions to discover how biblical counseling may help you.

The next step in the counseling process is to complete the intake forms that follow. We have designed them to allow the counseling process to start smoothly and to allow us to connect you with the resources that fit your needs. The counseling forms are designed to (1) help us to get to know you in a comprehensive, holistic, and efficient manner and (2) help you organize your thoughts about your counseling objectives. Please allow 30 minutes to complete these forms. Please read through everything carefully and contact us with any questions (503-588-0403 ext 1).

We are grateful to be able to serve you and look forward to walking with you through God’s agenda for your life.

Dave Hamlin, Tara Cox, & Emily Dempster

The Salem Heights Biblical Counseling Team

(503) 588-0403 ext 1

**Counseling Intake Form  
Personal Data**

Name:

Date of Birth:

If a minor, name of parents/guardian:

Requesting what type of counseling:

Individual

Pre-Marital (offered to Salem Heights Church members only)

Marriage

Method of Counseling:

Remote, video conferencing

In person

Either

Gender:

Phone Number:

May we leave a message?

Email:

Address:

Occupation:

Employer:

Referred by:

How did you hear about us?

Salem Heights Church attender

Referral from Salem/Keizer school district

Referral from my church

Other

**Emergency Contact Information**

Name:

Relationship:

Phone Number:

Email:

## **Marriage & Family Information**

For marriage counseling, we ask both spouses fill out the form separately.

Are you:

- Single
- Married
- Separated
- Divorced

If married:

Date of Marriage:

Name of Spouse:

Spouse Date of Birth:

Address, if different:

Phone Number:

Have you been separated in your current marriage? If yes, please explain.

Have either of you ever filed for divorce? If yes, please explain.

Have either you or your spouse been married before? If yes, why did the marriage end?

If currently separated: How long have you been separated? What are/were reasons for separation?

Children: List name, age and gender of each child

## **Spiritual/Religious Information**

Church Name:

How many times do you attend each month?

Please list ministry involvement:

Have you received Jesus as your person Savior?

How would you define the gospel and what it means to be a Christian?

Have you been baptized?

## **Health Information**

Are you currently taking prescription medication? If yes, please list.

If you are not currently taking prescriptions, have you ever been prescribed medication to treat a mental health issue? If yes, please list.

How would you describe your overall general physical health?

How often do you exercise?

How is your sleep?

Do you have any mental health related concerns (anxiety, depression, OCD, bi-polar, etc.)?

Do you struggle with suicidal thoughts?

## **Presenting Issues**

Describe the current struggle for which you are seeking counseling.

What have you done about it (most effective and least effective)?

Please describe any family history that might be pertinent to your reason for seeking counseling.

Any further information that we should know? (relationship in family of origin, significant losses or events, etc.)

Special requests or accommodations:

## Counseling Office Hours

We look forward to helping you. Due to the nature of our ministry and the fact that it is funded with the support of generous donations from our community, we do have limited hours. If this is an emergency, please call 911, or Psychiatric Crisis Center (PCC) – Salem at 503-585-4949. Once your online submission is received, you will be contacted within 3 business days to schedule an initial intake appointment.

Our Counseling office hours are Monday 10am-noon and Tuesday-Thursday 10am-2pm. During this time, we can be reached at 503-588-0403 (ext 1). **Counseling appointments are offered Monday and Wednesday evenings from 5-8pm and Tuesday-Thursday from 10am-3pm.** We are unable to provide childcare for appointments and children are not allowed to wait in our waiting area. Thank you for your understanding.

Please check all the times you are available for an appointment. Limited availability may result in longer wait times.

Monday evening (5-8pm)  
Wednesday evening (5-8pm)  
Tuesday (10am-3pm)  
Wednesday (10am-3pm)  
Thursday (10am-3pm)

Anything else you'd like to let us know about your availability?

## Financial Policy

Salem Heights Church is able to offer free biblical counseling because of the generous donations of those who give to our ministry. We do not charge for the counseling services offered, however there is a one-time \$35 fee requested to cover all resource materials and provide training to our biblical counselors.

If our ministry has been a blessing to you and God has given you the means to do so, then your financial gift is most welcome. In such cases, checks should be made out to Salem Heights Church, rather than to a particular pastor or counselor, as a way of joining with our members to proclaim the Gospel throughout Salem and even to the ends of the earth (Matthew 28:18-20).

## **Philosophy of Care**

We are committed to providing a balanced and biblical approach to counseling. By biblical counseling we mean that your counselor is a Christian with special training and experience in applying the truth of the Bible to life. We believe that the Bible speaks to all of life and to all its problems, but it takes careful thought and prayerful wisdom to know how to make those connections. We don't believe that the Bible is simply a how-to book for happiness.

We are confident that through the Scriptures and the power of His Spirit, God has given us all the instruction necessary for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3-4). It is our joy to help real people with real problems using the Bible. Your counseling will be biblical, pastoral counseling in which the Scriptures are held as the final authority in all matters. If you are not sure that you will be interested in biblical counseling, you will have the option of attending one or two sessions to discover how biblical counseling may help you.

Most importantly, we believe that the Bible ultimately points us to a Person – the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that real change comes when people learn to see themselves and their problems in the context of a loving, vital relationship with Christ. This does not mean that you must be a Christian to profit from our counseling, although we believe that deep and lasting change is brought about only by God Himself. Because of this, we do not use the Bible in either a superficial or heavy-handed way. When necessary, we will work with your physician or other professionals to ensure you receive the appropriate medical care in conjunction with the counseling services you receive.

### **The Biblical Counseling Ministry Team:**

Salem Heights Church Biblical Counseling Ministry utilizes the help of both trained lay volunteers and pastors. Our counselors do not know everything about biblical teaching and its application to life; nevertheless, they do know much and will do their utmost to help you. Counselors will honestly tell you if they require additional assistance from another member of the Biblical Counseling Ministry. Please understand that biblical counseling consists of Christians providing scriptural advice and practical application. Yet the counselee is held fully responsible for how he/she implements that advice (James 1:23-25). In addition, our counselors are neither psychologists, nor professional counselors. The counseling team consists of pastors, lay counselors, and trainees under the direction of the church elders who provide guidance and oversight. The staff of Salem Heights Church Biblical Counseling Ministry will supervise the trainees and lay volunteers. A biblical counselor trainee may be present in any counseling session for training and observation.

### **Your Rights as a Counselee:**

As a counselee, you have the right to discuss outcomes and challenges regarding the counseling and receive an estimate of the predicted length, goals, and outcome of the counseling, as well as alternative options to that counseling. You have the right to ask about and/or refuse any techniques used. You are encouraged to report to an elder/pastor or counseling director if you have any grievances regarding the counseling. You may terminate counseling at any time, but we encourage you to consult with your counselor as to the best way to do so.

### **Not Professional Advice:**

If you have significant legal, financial, medical, or other technical questions, we may help you seek advice from an independent professional in that field.

### **Referral Process:**

We believe in biblical counseling and the future support of the Body of Christ once counseling is completed. However, in the case that progress is not being made, a conflict of interest, or for medical concerns, we do make referrals. With your permission, we will work with your family physician and insurance to help seek medical or professional care if needed.

### **Homework:**

Homework is sometimes given between sessions. This can range from reading information to taking a practical step in your counseling process.

## **Confidentiality Clause**

Confidentiality is an important aspect of the counseling process. We carefully guard the information you entrust to us to the fullest extent possible. As a church-based counseling ministry, we do not offer absolute confidentiality. There are times when it may be necessary for us to share specific information with others. Examples include but are not limited to matters of church discipline (cf. Matt 18:15 ff.), divorce and separation which may include notifying the pastor/elder of counselee's attending church, criminal activities, and potential harm to self or others. Additionally, when a counselor is uncertain how to address a particular situation, the counselor may consult with another member of the Biblical Counseling Ministry team at Salem Heights Church for the purpose of providing the highest level of care within the ministries of the church. To best care for you, we will work together as a ministry team while keeping the circle of confidentiality as tight as possible.

There are times when counseling information may be shared outside the church context. Those exceptions would include, but are not limited to the following:

- Known or suspected abuse of any kind
- The intent to take criminal actions or violence against another person
- Credible suicidal thoughts or intentions

If you are suicidal during the course of your counseling with your counselor, it is crucial that you talk with your counselor about these matters. By signing below, you agree to share any suicidal thoughts or intentions with your counselor at any time they arise, and by phone if they occur in between sessions, and that you will seek medical care if you become suicidal in the course of your counseling.

In the case of marriage or family counseling, there is limited confidentiality, meaning the confidentiality belongs to the couple and not the individual.

Confidentiality for counseling at Salem Heights Church is defined by pastor-parishioner privilege because we are a local church and our counselors operate as agents of the church (pastors/ministers), not agents of the state (licensed counselors). This means counseling conversations are inadmissible in the court of law. All counseling forms and notes taken by the counselor are the property of Salem Heights Church Biblical Counseling Ministry. They are protected as confidential and may not be used in court proceedings or in any other way that is not authorized by the Biblical Counseling Ministry Team. If your counseling needs require professional representations in a court setting by a counselor, Salem Heights Church Biblical Counseling will likely not be the best fit for your needs.

### **Waiver of Liability**

In seeking counseling from Salem Heights Church Biblical Counseling Ministry, please acknowledge your understanding of the following conditions and further release Salem Heights Church, its elders, staff, counselors, employees, and all ministry team leadership from any legal liability, claim, or litigation arising from your participation in this voluntary program:

1. Counseling will be provided by pastors or church-trained lay leaders. The counseling staff is not a licensed counseling service through the state of Oregon.
2. All counseling is provided in accordance with the biblical principles adhered to by Salem Heights Church and is not necessarily provided in adherence to any local or national psychological or psychiatric associations;
3. No representation has been made, either expressly or implied, that the biblical counseling, as conducted by the above-mentioned counselors, is accepted as customary psychological and/or psychiatric therapy within the definitional terms utilized by those professions;
4. In consideration for receiving any form of counseling from Salem Heights Church, the person receiving the counseling agrees to release and waive any and all claims of any kind against the ministry, the staff, the pastoral/lay encouragers or any participating church, which may arise from, result out of, or be related to conduct or advice given.

### **Salem Heights Church Biblical Counseling Policies**

I understand that Salem Heights Church may terminate services for noncompliance with the agenda of care and/or agreed upon administrative issues, failure to keep or cancel appointments, criminal misconduct, violence, or other similar issues.

Having clarified the principles and policies of our counseling ministry, we joyfully anticipate the opportunity to walk with you as Christ enables you to grow in spiritual maturity and usefulness to His body. If you have any questions about these guidelines, please speak with your counselor or call the church office (503-588-0403, ext 1).



## **Payment**

Salem Heights Church Biblical Counseling provides free biblical counseling because we never want cost to hinder those in need of support and encouragement.

Because of this, we rely on the generous donations of those who desire to partner with us in ministry to help with the cost of providing counseling sessions that would normally cost around \$65 per session, for a series of 6-8 appointments.

If you have been blessed and encouraged through the counseling or training offered through Salem Heights Biblical Counseling and desire to give, please consider making a donation to our ministry beyond the \$35 resource fee. It is through gifts like these that we are able to continue offering counseling and training to the local church.

If the \$35 resource fee is a hardship for you, please continue to complete and submit your intake form, and then contact the church office (503-588-0403, ext 1).