

Churches and Biblical Counselling

How, then, does biblical counselling relate to the work of the church?

The Bible tells us that every believer is called into the body of Christ (Ephesians 3:6) and every church community is called to glorify God by becoming mature – growing into the stature of the fullness of Christ himself (Ephesians 4:13). This vision for Christians and churches to grow more like Jesus is central to the biblical counselling vision. God brings this about as believers 'speak the truth in love' (Ephesians 4:15), and his Holy Spirit causes gospel light to shine into situations of sin and suffering. Through such ministry we grow, and God creates distinctive communities where honesty, humility and grace are increasingly evident in order that we might be ever more effective ambassadors for Christ in our local communities.

Biblical Counselling UK seeks to encourage and support this vision in churches across the UK. It does so by education and training in biblical counselling, by resourcing churches and individuals and fostering a network of individuals and churches who share an enthusiasm for this vision.

MORE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT
www.biblicalcounselling.org.uk



Biblical Counselling UK

Christ-centred change, enabled by the Spirit, through the ministry of the Word, in the local church.



WHAT IS
**BIBLICAL
COUNSELLING?**

www.biblicalcounselling.org.uk

THE ESSENCE OF Biblical Counselling

An obvious way to describe biblical counselling is to say that it is the provision of counsel that comes from the Bible.

The Scriptures tell us that God's 'divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life' (2 Peter 1:3). Therefore, with Paul, we can 'speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words' (1 Corinthians 2:13). We are privileged to be entrusted with the very 'words of life' (John 6:63-68) and it is only by hearing and applying this word that we can ever hope to live to his praise and glory.

Speaking this word happens publicly when someone preaches and privately in our devotional Bible reading. But it also happens in interpersonal settings when biblical truth is passed from

one person to another. We could call this conversational ministry; we could call it soul care; we could call it individual pastoral care; we could call it encouraging one another daily (Hebrews 3:13); or we could call it biblical counselling.

This conversational ministry will happen in both formal and informal settings. Formal counselling happens where people agree a specific meeting to address a specific issue. Informally, and much more frequently, believers pass on biblical wisdom in daily conversation – in church, in family and in work and social contexts. Such counselling will often happen between believers, but it is also a component of our evangelism. For example, to those without an ethical framework for decision-making, a coherent biblical worldview can be both intriguing and attractive, and hearing wise biblical thoughts on a life struggle may be the first step to exploring the Christian faith.

A Historical Perspective

Individual pastoral care and conversational ministry has been happening ever since the church came into being.

But what sometimes gets referred to today as the 'biblical counselling movement' has a particular history having emerged as a response to the development of psychological theories and the therapies derived from them. At a time when psychologists, counsellors and therapists were replacing pastors as the main source of help for life's struggles, the biblical counselling movement argued for a continuing and distinctive role for the church and the Bible in caring for the struggling person. This doesn't mean dismissing the input of others but regaining confidence in all that the Christian faith has to offer.

CCEF (The Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation in Philadelphia) has been at the forefront of this movement since its foundation in 1968, but books and training courses reflecting the biblical counselling approach have only become widely available in the UK relatively recently. Biblical Counselling UK was established by pastors, doctors, counsellors and church workers who had themselves benefited from the work of CCEF and wanted to encourage UK churches to make more use of the resources available from the biblical counselling movement.

