

Oakbrook Community Church ● 705H Old Trolley Rd ● Summerville, SC 29485
Informed Consent Form

Our goal in providing Christian counseling is to help you meet the challenges of life in a way that will please and honor the Lord Jesus Christ and allow you to fully enjoy his love for you and his plans for your life. We offer one-to-one Christian counseling/discipling to a limited number of inquirers who live in the greater Charleston, South Carolina area. Because of our commitment to the local church we expect to maintain that relationship between Counselor/Discipler, Counselee/Disciplee and their respective local Church. If you are not a member of a local church, we will assist you in finding one that can continue the care and accountability that you will need after the counseling/discipling process is complete. We would like you to know that our counseling/discipling is distinctly Christian and that we are not certified/licensed by the State of South Carolina. If you would like Christian counseling or discipling through us, you may, at your discretion, pursue that desire with us.

However, there are several conditions upon which counseling/discipling cases will be initiated and understood. They are listed as follows:

- All counseling/discipling is conducted in accordance with the counselor's understanding of Scripture. Your counseling/discipling will be biblical in which the Scriptures are the final authority in all cases. If you are not sure that you will be interested in biblically based counseling/discipling, you have the option of attending one or two sessions to discover what biblical counseling/discipling is like. If you are unwilling to use the Bible as the final authority in counseling/discipling it will be terminated.
- We believe that the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life. Therefore, our counseling is based on scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. Neither the pastoral nor the lay counselors of this church are trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such specialists.
- In reflecting our concern for your situation we will be assigning homework even at the first session. We are convinced that homework is an essential element in your counseling/discipling. Regular homework assignments set a pattern for expectation of change and provide hope. Homework clarifies expectations and provides tools for daily life outside the counseling/discipling session. Homework enables us to counsel/disciple more rapidly. Homework enables both the counselor/discipler and the counselee/disciplee to gauge progress or lack of it. Homework allows all parties to deal with the problems and patterns that develop under controlled current conditions. Homework assignments meet the specific needs of each counselee/disciplee. Homework may include prayer, scripture reading, activities, book reading (purchases if unavailable from the library), papers, short answer, forms, reports, letters, etc. It is highly recommended that you obtain either a journal or 3-ring binder (or both) to stay organized and to keep track of your assignments. Failure to complete homework may result in termination of counseling/discipling until completed (case by case situation).
- The counseling/discipling we do is part of our overall understanding of the local church ministry philosophy of disciple making. Therefore, we may have one or two people assisting your case.
- We recognize and respect the authority and discipline of the local church. If you are not attending a church, we will expect you to attend a Bible preaching and believing church weekly. If you so desire, we will be glad to make a recommendation.
- Information disclosed in counseling/discipling sessions will be held confidential only as the counselor believes the Bible or the State requires. Confidentiality is an important aspect of the counseling process, and we will carefully guard the information you entrust to us. There are four situations, however, when it may be necessary for us to share certain information with others: 1) when a counselor is uncertain of how to address a particular problem and needs to seek advice from a pastor or elder in this church; 2) when a counselee attends another church and it is necessary to talk with his or her pastor or elders; 3) when there is a clear indication that someone may be harmed unless others intervene; or 4) when a person persistently refuses to renounce a particular sin and it becomes necessary to seek the assistance of others in the church to encourage repentance and reconciliation. Please be assured that our counselors strongly prefer not to disclose personal information to others, and they will make every effort to help you find ways to resolve a problem as privately as possible. However, your counselor will inform you, if possible, of such decisions beforehand (Proverbs 15:22, 19:11, 24:11; Matthew 18:12-20; 1 Cor 6:1-8; Gal 6:1-6; Eph 4:29; 2 Tim 2:24-26; James 5:9).
- At any time during the counseling/discipling for reasons sufficient to him/her, the counselor—as also the counselee—shall have the option of terminating counseling/discipling.

- Because counseling is part of the ministry of Oakbrook CC, we do not charge a specific fee for counseling/discipling for members of Oakbrook CC. Since there are costs involved in maintaining this ministry, counselees may want to express their thanks to help maintain the ministry in a tangible way. If you would like to contribute something (if possible) monetarily (cash or check), please feel free to do so (Rm 4:4; 1 Cor 3:8; 1 Tim 5:18). Donations should be made to Oakbrook Community Church (writing “**Counseling**” in the memo block of your check). Also, part of the weekly homework assignments may require purchasing materials that relate to the counseling/discipling being done. Counselees are asked to pay for this material if at all possible.
- We want you to understand that biblical counseling/discipling consists of giving scriptural advice and the practical application of the same to each individual. Yet, the counselee is held fully responsible for how he/she implements that advice.
- We are confident that the Bible has all of the information necessary for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). We believe there are no problems between persons, which the Bible fails to address either in general or in specific principles. Our counselors are not infallible. Nor do they pretend to know all there is to know about biblical teaching and its applications to life. They are well equipped however, and competent to help people change. They will make a point to differentiate between God’s commands and their suggestions. Furthermore, our counselors may at times, seek assistance from other trained counselors in their specific area of experience.
- Not Professional Advice — some of our counselors work in professional fields outside the church. When serving as counselors within this church, however, they do not provide the same kind of professional advice and services that they do when they are hired in their professional capacities. Therefore, if you have significant legal, financial, medical or other technical questions, you should seek advice from an independent professional. Our pastoral and lay counselors will be happy to cooperate with such advisors (and can recommend those who hold to Christian principles) and help you to consider their counsel in the light of relevant scriptural principles.
- If a conflict should arise between the counselee and the counselor, both parties must agree to resolve the dispute outside the secular court system. Specific guidelines apply as outlined by the Book of Church (BCO) of the Presbyterian Church in America, Part II, *The Rules of Discipline*, <http://www.pcanet.org/bco> (See App I).
- Childcare is NOT provided, so as a professional courtesy we ask that you make other arrangements regarding this matter so as to not conflict, distract, or break the focus of our time together. We want to be stewards of our time as a gift to you and ask that you handle these arrangements before our appointment.
- If you are interested in biblical counseling/discipling, kindly sign below as indicated. I have read the conditions for counseling/discipling set forth in this *Informed Consent Form*. Furthermore, having clearly stated 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 about these guidelines, please talk with a pastor or elder. If these guidelines are acceptable to you, please sign below.

If you are a parent or guardian of an under-aged child and you are requesting counseling/discipling for them, please sign below and enter the child’s name that will receive the counseling/discipling. In addition, you have the option of sitting-in the counseling/discipling session(s).

Print Name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Print Spouse Name: _____

Spouse: _____ (If applicable) Date: _____

Print Child’s Name: _____

Child _____ (If applicable) Date: _____