

CONSENT TO COUNSEL

Grace Community Church

4554 Research Park Boulevard

Huntsville, AL 35806

OUR FRAMEWORK: The discipleship counseling provided is based on scriptural principles rather than 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. Counseling will be provided by one of the pastors or trained disciplers supervised by a pastor. We strongly encourage same gender counseling. Some of the counseling at GCC is provided as part of a discipleship counseling training program. To facilitate both counseling and training, the discipler may have one to two people assisting him/her in each counseling session.

Biblical Basis: We believe that the Bible provides sufficient guidance and instruction for faith and life. Therefore, our counseling is based on scriptural principles rather than those of psychology or psychiatry. Neither the pastoral nor the lay counselors of this ministry are licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals. All of our counselors are under the authority of the elders of Grace Community Church.

Not Professional Advice: If you have significant legal, financial, medical or other technical questions, you should seek advice from another independent professional. Our pastoral and lay counselors will be happy to cooperate with such advisors and help you to consider their counsel in the light of relevant scriptural principles.

Confidentiality: Biblical confidentiality is conditional, and it is also an important aspect of the counseling process; we will carefully guard the information you entrust to us. However, because we are continually training others to be effective counselors, we ask that you agree to allow counselors in training to be present during your sessions. There are four other situations 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 another 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 we otherwise 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 (see Proverbs 15:22; 24:11; Matthew 18:15-20). 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 problems as privately as possible.

Childcare: Unfortunately, at this time we cannot provide childcare while you attend your counseling session. If you have children who are not involved in the counseling session itself, please do not bring them with you to your session.

Counseling Minors:¹ We believe the primary responsibility for shepherding and discipling children and teenagers rests with their parents. Accordingly, when counseling children and teenagers, the counselor may share information from the counseling sessions with either or both of the custodial parents if the

¹ When requesting counseling for a teenager, Consent to Counsel forms must be signed by both the teenager and a custodial parent.

counselor believes it is wise to do so.

Liability: It is intended that the Bible shall be the authority governing the counseling process, and that God's Glory is the ultimate goal. However, failure of the Counselor to interpret or apply the Bible in any particular way shall not subject the Counselor to liability or give rise to complaint by anyone. There shall be no legal or other liability that attaches the Counselor or any related institution or person for any advice, method, conduct or any act or omission related in any way to the service that is provided, and Counselee acknowledges that Counselee is voluntarily seeking this counsel (free from coercion, duress, or pressure) with a full understanding of the nature, purpose, and effect of this agreement.

Termination: At any time and for any reason, Counselor or Counselee may terminate counseling. However, termination will not preclude the Counselor from making the disclosures set forth above if deemed appropriate by the Counselor, or if compelled by other legal means. The Counselor is not required to keep records, but if records are made, the Counselor may destroy any such records without incurring liability.

Resolution of Conflicts: On rare occasions a conflict may arise between counselor and 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 the counselor or with this church as a result of counseling will be settled through mediation within the church according to the principles of Scripture and the authority of this local church.

OUR FEE: All counseling is done free of charge as a ministry of GCC. Part of the weekly homework assignments may require the purchase of materials that correspond to the counseling.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Printed name: _____