

Counseling
counselor, pastoral
counseling is part of



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Counseling is the aspect of ministry that I am excited about starting. I have been a law enforcement officer for 16 years and I wear many hats in that profession. A counselor is a hat I have worn many times, but not from a pastoral perspective. Counseling in a pastoral function is different from other types of counseling. Unlike a secular counselor, pastoral counseling is part of a pastor's job description and it sometimes can play a larger role than other roles that the pastor has.

As a pastor, duties include loving, protecting, and caring for those in the congregation. Pastoral counseling must be counseling that is rooted in the Bible. I highlighted this in one of our textbooks.

“ Theology matters. Understanding people biblically matters. Biblical counselors pursue compassionate and wise counseling where our love abounds in the depth of the knowledge about the heart in the world. Our depth of knowledge of people starts with knowing and applying the written Word and knowing personally the living Word. It then moves us to knowing people originally designed—Creation.” (Gospel-Centered Counseling, 2014) Pastoral counseling uses Scripture, explaining and applying them to the individual's life. Sometimes this comes in the form of rebuking, correcting, and training of the people that need counseling.

“ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work”. (2 Tim 3:16) Another great aspect of pastoral counseling is that the pastor can have a relationship with his

counselee that remains in place outside the sessions. The pastor can observe and follow the progression of the church members that he/she counsels.

The pastor can also seek the advice of others in the church such as deacons and senior leadership, always keeping in mind whatever confidentiality agreement the pastor has with the counselee. Negative aspects of pastoral counseling exist as well. Sometimes the pastor is overwhelmed with many tasks and should be mindful not to take on more than they can handle. Many churches spread counseling among assistant pastors who are comfortable with counseling.

Second, care must be given to avoid counseling situations that possibly lead to sin. Pastors should not counsel the opposite sex alone and need to put in place safeguards for those situations. Judgement should also be used to be certain that a dependent relationship doesn't occur between the pastor and their counsees. The counselor should always guide the counselee to be dependent on God and His word.