



5 MISTAKES CHURCHES MAKE

WHEN STARTING A BIBLICAL
COUNSELING MINISTRY



Launch too Soon

If you Launch a Biblical counseling ministry before your team is ready, you will gain a reputation that you can't effectively help people. Launching too soon can set your ministry development back five years before you are able to reset the ministry and Launch it again. Take the time to make sure your people are ready and they have been properly trained and vetted. Your church needs to have plan for oversight, resources, and appropriate policies in place to make sure that your team is set up for success.

Launch too Slow

If you insist upon fully certified counselors before they get involved in counseling ministry, you will lose more of your trainees to other ministries before they ever start counseling. Our Lay Counseling Certificate is not all they will ever need to know, but it is a good benchmark to get a team started and gives them quality tools to get involved with competence. In our online course, *Step-by-Step Guide to Starting a Counseling Ministry*, we detail a leadership curve that helps leaders plan for wise levels of involvement based upon experience level and competency.

Choosing the Wrong People

"All-Truth" or "All-Grace" counselors have an imbalance that is hard to overcome. A lack of patience or a lack of confidence in God's Word is what creates these imbalances. As you train in your first year, your goal is to identify the 4-5 people who can best reflect the heart of Christ to those who are struggling. They become a reproducing team that can model a compassionate heart for future participants. Our Launch partnership allows a church to take ownership of a proven training process that takes place over time in your church with our help. You will find that including just anyone who shows an interest in counseling ministry usually backfires. Take the time to identify and grow your leaders!

Focusing Outward before Inward

Many pastors want to reach the hurting in their local community through Biblical counseling. However, you must start by counseling those within your church. If you aren't already reaching the hurting in your church, you won't be effective at reaching the hurting in your neighborhood. If you think the hurting aren't already in your church, first determine "Why that is the case?" Perhaps they are afraid to tell you if or how they struggle, or perhaps they have already left for a church that offers more help. You must start by developing healthy disciples in your church, because they will be key to reaching and counseling others in your neighborhood.

Failing to Delegate beyond Staff

When only staff members are responsible to counsel, churches will often limit the number of people they could reach. We have seen that lay counselors can be effective when they are trained and learn to use their story to impact others for Christ. Recent studies have concluded that lay counselors are often more effective than professional counselors. (see article, *Does Lay Counseling Really Work?*) A high-quality training program needs to help a church create a team of lay counselors, instead of just a pastoral staff who counsels.



Are you wrestling with how to develop a Biblical counseling team at your church? It can be an overwhelming task because it is a complicated ministry. Our LAUNCH partnerships are designed to bring flexible training, tested resources, and personal answers so that your LAUNCH will be successful the first time. We have worked with churches in more than 15 states and many countries. We have a plan and resources that can help you get started. Talk with someone today about whether Launch is right for you: go to <https://biblicalcounselingcenter.org/start-launch>.