

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’”

Matthew 25:35-40

Purpose

God delights in His benevolent nature. He is kind, gracious, generous, patient, and loving. He is unrelenting in his care for us, and we are called to do the same with others.

The Scriptures provide numerous examples of the church providing relief to individuals. These cover a spectrum of needs: medical, shelter, helps, finances, etc. God’s people have always been proactive in the work of mercy, and so it is desirable to organize our works and resources to this end (Matthew 5:42, Luke 10:30-37, Acts 2:45, Romans 12:8; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

The Benevolence Ministry (and Benevolence Fund) exists to extend mercy to those in need that God might be glorified and the nations be saved.

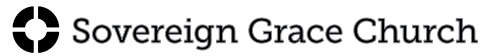
Policies

1. This ministry reflects the generous heart of God (Matthew 20:15). It is to be conducted with joy, not under compulsion, motivated by thankfulness to God for His generosity towards us (2 Corinthians 9:7ff).
2. This ministry compliments the broader ministry of the church. Participation and contributions to it are in addition to the participation and contributions of the more regular ministries of the church (ex. preaching, teaching, discipleship, worship, sacraments). As a result:

- a. We do not recommend individuals contribute to the Benevolence Fund unless they are first giving to the regular needs of the church (1 Corinthians 9:14).
 - b. The Benevolence Fund is a “restricted account” and not to be used for the regular ministry needs of the church.
3. This ministry must account for those with on-going needs, such as widows and orphans (James 1:27).
4. While this ministry may provide relief to anyone, our priority is to care for the members of our church (Romans 12:13; Galatians 6:10).
5. The normal use of the Benevolence Fund is for unusual, sudden, or severe needs. While distributions may be offered over an extended period of time, this ministry is not normally intended to provide financial sustenance.
6. Individuals needing long-term assistance should look first to their families and other appropriate agencies for help (1 Timothy 5:4-16; esp. verses 4,8, and 15). This may include public services and social programs.
7. Individuals able to work but not demonstrating appropriate effort to secure gainful employment normally do not qualify for financial assistance (2 Thessalonians 3:10).
8. All candidates for financial assistance must be willing to comply with a church-designated counselor. The counselor may require the candidate to provide additional financial information or to follow additional recommendations (ex. expense reductions, employment).
9. All disbursements from the Benevolence Fund must be approved by a deacon. Disbursements of \$500 or more require the approval of a deacon and a pastor. [NOTE: In the event that the church has no deacon(s), the pastor(s) and Church Finance and Law Committee provide oversight of the Benevolence Fund. In this case, all disbursements must be approved by a pastor. Disbursements of \$500 or more require the approval of a pastor and a member of the committee.]
10. Any alterations to these policies requires the approval of all pastors and the affirmation of the Church Finance and Law Committee.

Procedures

1. All candidates for financial aid must complete a *Financial Aid Application*.
2. All candidates for financial aid must be willing to meet with a church designated counselor before, during, and after receiving assistance.
3. Financial disbursements are approved as designated by policy. Instructions are then provided to the church bookkeeper by the person authorizing the aid.
4. Upon receiving financial aid, all recipients must complete a *Financial Aid Receipt*.
5. Documentation is kept on file by the church bookkeeper.
6. The Benevolence Ministry conducts itself in accordance with our *Statement on Counseling and Confidentiality*.



Financial Aid Application

Please complete the following form and submit to a pastor or deacon.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Amount requested: \$ _____

Description of need: _____

Do you have access to any other sources of aid? YES / NO (circle one)

If yes, describe: _____

Are you willing to comply with a church-designated counselor? This may include providing additional financial information or instructions to reduce expenditures or pursue gainful employment. YES / NO (circle one)

Additional information: _____



Financial Aid Receipt

Please complete the following form and submit to the church.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Amount received: \$ _____

Purpose of aid: _____

Signature of Recipient: _____

Statement on Counseling and Confidentiality (Rev. 7/10)

The Biblical Counseling ministry of this church exists to provide care, counsel, and support to members seeking assistance in their personal Christian walk.

All Christians struggle with sin and the effect it has on our lives and our relationships (see Romans 3:23; 7:7-25). Whenever a Christian is unable to overcome sinful attitudes or behaviors through private efforts, God commands that he should seek assistance from other members, and when needed from church leaders, who have the responsibility of providing pastoral counseling and oversight (see Rom. 15:14; Gal. 6:1-2; Colossians 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2; Hebrews 10:25-25; 13:17; James 5:16). Therefore, this church encourages and enjoins its people to seek counsel from and confess sins to each other and to our leaders.

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. Unless they specifically state otherwise, none of those who counsel in this church are trained or licensed as mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such specialists.

Although some members of the church work in professional fields outside the church, when serving as pastoral or biblical counselors within the church, they do not provide the same kind of professional advice and services they do when they are hired in their professional capacities. Therefore, members who have significant legal, financial, medical, or other technical questions should seek advice from independent professionals. Our pastoral and biblical counselors shall be available to cooperate with such advisors and help members to consider their advice in light of relevant scriptural principles.

Confidentiality and trustworthiness are important qualities in biblical counselors. Matters discussed in the context of counseling are held in confidence by the counselor or counseling team. However, if necessary, to serve you they may at times seek the counsel and help of others about particular situations, including the pastors of this church.