

DecisionTime Commitment Counseling

**A significant and rewarding ministry of
participating with God in leading others
to follow His will.**

I. WHAT IS A COMMITMENT COUNSELING MINISTRY?

Though commitment counseling is often a “behind-the-scenes” activity, it is a significant and rewarding ministry as you participate with God in leading others to following His will.

In many churches half or more of those who make a commitment to Jesus and to church membership will drop out. This decision counseling ministry is one strategy to reduce that significantly.

A. The Need for Decision Counselors

- ▶ To make sure the decision maker trusts Jesus.
- ▶ To clarify the decision being made.
- ▶ To encourage those making decisions.
- ▶ To help when several persons respond to the invitation.
- ▶ To maintain accurate records for follow-up.

B. The Counseling Team

The Pastor

- ▶ The key person on the team.
- ▶ Helps establish the commitment counseling ministry in a church.
- ▶ Interprets the process for the church.
- ▶ Helps to select decision counselors.
- ▶ Provides guidance for the entire decision counseling process.
- ▶ May also serve as the trainer, the receiver, and/or the presenter.

Coordinator

- ▶ Provides practical supervision for the decision counseling ministry.
- ▶ Works with the Pastor to set up a schedule of assigned services for the counselors.
- ▶ Works with the Pastor to enlist decision counselors.
- ▶ Determines how many counselors are needed for each service.
- ▶ Responsible for the decision counseling room.
- ▶ Might serve as trainer and/or advisor.

Trainer

- ▶ Leads the training sessions that prepare decision counselors.

Receiver

- Greets a person coming forward to make a decision.
- Listens as the decision is being described, voices a brief prayer, and then introduces the person to a decision counselor.

Advisor

- The most skilled decision counselor. Needs to be prepared for any counseling need.
- Assist counselors and decision makers.
- Once commitment counseling is completed, is introduced to the decision maker and hears the person's decision.

Decision Counselor

- Works most intimately with the decision maker.
- Guides the decision maker in his or her decision.

FIVE MAIN DUTIES

- Clarify the decision.
- Assist in making a decision by using the Bible and the Personal Commitment Guide.
- Help the decision maker complete the Commitment Record.
- Introduce the decision maker to the advisor.
- Lead the decision maker to the presenter.

Presenter

■ Introduces a decision maker to the congregation.

[This position is usually held by the Pastor.]

THE COMMITMENT COUNSELING AREA

1. A Reception Area

(usually in the front of the worship center pulpit)

2. A Counseling Room

(usually a separate counseling area or room)

- ▶ allows for better privacy**
- ▶ a more relaxed atmosphere for counselor and decision maker**
- ▶ reduces distractions**
- ▶ allows for chair arrangement**

II. WHAT KIND OF PERSON SHOULD A DECISION COUNSELOR BE?

SIX PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Must be a Christian.
2. Must be a GROWING Christian.
3. Must be a praying person.
4. Must possess a genuine love of others.
5. Must be a committed member of the church.
6. Must be willing to continue learning.

NOW EVALUATE YOURSELF.

III. WHAT ARE SOME SKILLS A DECISION COUNSELOR USES?

1. LISTENING SKILLS

- ➡ **Listening skills can be developed and improved.**
- ➡ **Good listening skills will allow you to “pin down” the decision for clarity.**
- ➡ **Attentive listening displays the love and patience of Christ to a fellow believer.**

A. Barriers to Effective Listening

- ➡ **Distraction**
- ➡ **Excessive talking by the counselor**
- ➡ **Personal bias towards the decision maker**

Identify in the margin some distractions that may adversely affect your ability to listen effectively to a decision maker.

B. Better Listening Strategies

- ➡ **Listen with empathy and sincerity.**
- ➡ **Listen with patience.**
- ➡ **Listen with your body.**
- ➡ **Listen with objectivity.**
- ➡ **Listen with a positive attitude.**

2. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- ➡ **Requires communicating face-to-face.**
- ➡ **Clarify any word that might not be understood.**
- ➡ **Stick to the Guide.**

A. Helpful Hints for Effective Communication

- ➡ **Speak directly to the person. Use the person's name.**
- ➡ **Know what you want to say and focus on the decision.**
This is not the time to “chat.”
- ➡ **Be positive and confident. You have the Holy Spirit and the authority of God's Word to help you.**
- ➡ **Don't overwhelm the decision maker with information.**
- ➡ **Use precise language. Don't take anything for granted.**

IV. THE ROLE OF A DECISION COUNSELOR

A. Before the Service

- ➡ Pray
- ➡ Review the Personal Commitment Guide.

B. During the Invitation

- ➡ Be in your assigned place.
- ➡ Keep your eyes open. You must know when you are needed.
- ➡ You want the total appearance to be pleasant.

C. As the Counseling Session Begins

- ➡ Introduce yourself. Be warm and friendly. Put the decision maker at ease.
- ➡ Write the decision maker's name on the Commitment Record in the Guide.
- ➡ Ask a transition question—"What decision would you like to make?"
- ➡ Listen attentively as the decision maker describes the decision.
- ➡ Clarify the decision by restating it as you understand it.
- ➡ Ask the decision maker to confirm or correct the decision as you have restated it.