

## **Benevolence Counseling Policy Overview**

The GracePoint Benevolence program is available to families and individuals (18 years or older) who have been members of GracePoint Church for a minimum of 6 months.

The GracePoint Benevolence Counseling process contains a **minimum of 6 sessions** with a financial counselor from GracePoint Church. Their goal is to help you understand and move towards financial health. It is not expected that when the sessions are complete, that all financial burdens are over, but that together a plan has been established and is already in the works moving you closer to financial health. If married, both husband and wife must be present for all counseling sessions.

Our definition of financial health is **where your finances and the choices you are making when it comes to money are pleasing to God**. This includes tithing, avoiding debt, using a budget (or spending plan), saving and making spending choices based on Bible Financial Truths (which you will go through in one of your first sessions).

The GracePoint Benevolence Counselor will be following a **Biblical Based approach to finances**. If you (or your spouse) are not a Christian, know that the principles and beliefs that they are communicating are not up to debate. Though the counselor will happily explain why we believe this and show you in scripture where these beliefs are derived. If you are not willing to hold to these principles, you will not be allowed to continue the counseling process.

**Financial assistance may or may not be given before, during and/or after the GracePoint Benevolence Counseling process.** There are many factors involved in providing assistance including (but not exclusively) the level of need, what actions have already been taken to meet needs, the availability of church funds, the person or couples commitment to the program and learning, social justice issues and willingness to apply advice given by counselor and church representatives.

If there is a financial need, **all requests must be submitted in writing with an invoice attached**. No funds will be given directly to an individual. It is no one person's decision what requests are approved. There are many variables (including if the church has the funds at the time) that contribute to the availability of funds and whether requests can be granted. Payments can take up to 3 weeks depending on the accounting cycle of the church and giving. Please try as much as possible to plan and let us know of needs before they are past due.

While part of the Financial Counseling process, **you must continue to supply pay stubs and bills at each meeting** to your counselor.

You must **let your counselor know of any other assistance** you are receiving before and during the counseling process. This may or may not effect decisions to support financial requests.

When in the GracePoint Benevolence Counseling process, **we ask that you not solicit members of GracePoint for additional funds.** We will not discuss your process with anyone outside of the those who are helping in the process (could include the GracePoint Stewardship Team, the church staff, the elders, outside agencies, and those listed on your application). As tithing members of GracePoint they are already helping you and do not even know it.

During the process (as well as before and after), **we encourage you to be a part of a life group** for moral, spiritual and emotional support. Life groups are the primary care system for those who are members and attending GracePoint Church. No one is perfect and we do not want anyone to be alone in their struggles. You never know who else might have been in a similar situation and have Godly advice for you.

Sign below to show that you have read, understand and are willing to follow these policies.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_