

Pastoral Counseling Effective from a Christian Perspective (An Introduction to Today's Ministry)

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Abstract

Counseling is an inseparable part of carrying out church duties, because the task of counseling involves the duties of the church. This paper discusses about counseling carried out by God's servants, in this case the Pastor. The lack of several churches in practicing counseling services encourages the author to offer suggestions in the fruit of this paper to serve as guidelines, at least as motivation for readers or enthusiasts of problems related to this. Thus, church leaders need to revive this activity in their pastoral ministry. The method used by the author in exploring this paper is by taking a qualitative approach with reference to the literature or literature obtained from a collection of related sources, in this case Pastoral Counseling, namely by correlating the perspectives of experts. Also collect facts and describe cases.

Keywords

pastoral counseling; pastor;
servant of God's Minister



I. Introduction

A servant of God who serves the congregation or who is also known as the Shepherd of the congregation The congregation or known as the pastor has a very complex ministry task. Preaching, teaching, visiting (turba), church meetings, ministering to the sick, married people, even the dead, etc. And counseling service is as a routine ministry duty of a pastor. Not to mention the addition of community, government, joint, denomination activities, adding to the busyness of priests in the community service activities.

This complex service certainly makes the pastor determine the priority of services that are considered important because it involves many people. It can also lead to many other services being neglected. Pastoral counseling may be a ministry that is often neglected by pastors because it is judged to only serve individuals, and take a long time.

Many church pastors neglect the pastoral counseling services that exist in their churches. This can be seen from the absence of special hours or days for the congregation to hold counseling and the absence of the congregation to counsel with the pastor. One study n came from a student's final project about pastoral counseling services in churches in Indonesia Surakarta, found that there are still many congregations who have a problem that is no longer coming to their pastor for some reason. And this proves that Pastoral Counseling is not going well.

If we look at the current ministry situation, there are many Christian service institutions that provide counseling services to serve cross-denominational congregations. This is certainly positive, but for the pastors, this is not a good thing, because the pastor cannot pay attention to the problems that arise. experienced by the congregation. The pastor must realize that the church is his responsibility, which he must serve and pastor.

From the description above, the author takes this problem into a paper with a discussion of Effective Pastoral Counseling from a Christian perspective, and hopefully it will be a blessing for pastors in particular, and for all God's ministers in general.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Pastoral Counseling in Challenge

Pastoral Counseling What and How?

Many Christians and pastors think that if the pastor gives advice to his congregation who has various life problems, that's why it is called counseling practice or more closely called Pastoral Counseling. There are three other opinions, because this is pastoral counseling that emphasizes Christianity, so its ministry It must also be a spiritual aid that is based on the Bible, so if there is no use of the Bible verses given then it is not Pastoral Counseling. Necessary to understand in advance the meaning and definition of the Oral Counseling. Counseling is a reciprocal relationship between two individuals, namely the counselor and trying to help or guide, and the counselee who needs understanding to be able to overcome the problems he faces.

According to Aart Martin Van Beek Counseling is:

The process of help which is essentially a psychological one between a helper and someone/some people who are being helped with the intention of alleviating the suffering of those being helped. Through this process, it is hoped that the counselee can gain new strength and poor insight to understand and if possible, overcome the problems he faces.

While the word pastoral comes from the Latin word " pastor " which means "shepherd". The word pastoral is an adjective for pastor. Van Beek further explained that someone who is pastoral is someone who has traits like a shepherd, who is willing to care for, nurture, protect and help others.

Work like that should be done and done by a shepherd, because it is the responsibility and obligation of a shepherd.

From explanation above it can be seen, if the two words " counseling " and " pastoral " are combined, then pastoral counseling has a more complete scope than counseling itself, and the Christian color of counseling is described through the term "pastoral".

Yakub B Susabda is somewhat different in placing the words pastoral and counseling, namely by prioritizing the word "pastoral" and using the word "counseling", he gives the following definition:

Pastoral counseling is a reciprocal relationship (interpersonal relationship) between God's servants (pastors, evangelists and so on) as counselors and their counsees (clients, people who ask for guidance), in which the counselor tries to guide counseling into an ideal counseling conversation atmosphere (Conduc). tive A dmosphere) which ensures that the counseling really understands what is going on with him, his problems, the conditions in his life where he is, and so on so that he is able to see his life's purpose in his relationship and responsibility to God and try achieve that goal with pressure, strength and ability as God has given him.

The definitions above have at least provided an overview of what and how pastoral counseling is. The service that should be carried out by the servant of God (in this case the Pastor of the congregation who serves the congregation or church) is his duty and responsibility as a pastor.

2.2 The Church 's View of Pastoral Counseling

It can be said that all churches in Indonesia, need Pastoral Counseling, but very few churches implement pastoral counseling services. Indeed, there are many churches that use counselors to help counselees in their churches, but do not realize that knowledge about this really needs to be observed. Yakub B. Susabda gave his opinion on this "science", as follows:

At present, there are many psychologists who love God to study the Bible and some even officially enter theological schools to become servants of God, but do not get proper guidance so that they do not use the contributions of psychology and theology in harmony in their counseling services. On the other hand, there are many servants of God who study psychology and counseling from people who have studied theology at the seminary, and are unable to integrate theology and psychology.

From the expert's description, it is clear that many churches are not aware of the effects of implementing counseling in the church, and some churches think that: Assuming psychiatrists and psychologists by themselves can teach counselees and provide guidance in accordance with Christian faith.

Considering that Christian universities or colleges that have counseling programs (guidance/counseling) produce alumni who can be directly employed in Christian schools even in churches to handle counseling services.

In this case, the church is passive and proactive in bridging pastoral counseling services, which is the responsibility of the church and in particular the pastor or pastor of the congregation concerned. In other words, pastoral counseling is an absolute minister in the community church, therefore the church needs to prepare more sensitively and intensively.

2.3 Pastor 's Views on Pastoral Counseling

A clear and detailed view of how pastors think about Pastoral Counseling in their ministry in the church. There is no such thing, however, the author sees that many churches, in this case pastors, do not have a specific schedule to hold pastoral counseling on a regular basis. Ordinary pastoral counseling is only held from time to time and that is Even if they only meet once and there is no follow-up action, or when there is a congregation who is about to get married, then counseling is held as "premarital counseling" (according to the author, the term premarital counseling is not appropriate because those who are getting married are not people who have problems so that they must provide counseling, more accurately called "premarital counseling"). From some of the explanations above, it can be interpreted that Pastoral Counseling services have not yet received a special place in the church and especially in the ministry of a pastor, many pastors focus more on preaching and visiting services (turba). Also, the church has many regular events, all of which have not touched pastoral counseling services which are expected.

2.4 Pastoral Counseling Duties of the Servant of God

a. Service Duty

There are two main duties of a servant of God as a church leader in serving the members of his congregation, namely:

1. Protect and help them overcome obstacles to their growth
 - Barriers that come from within themselves
 - The obstacles that come from I blis
 - Barriers that come from an unhealthy environment and association

2. Help them to continue to grow in salvation so that they become more and more fellow workers with God.

Pleased with this, Pastoral Counseling becomes the main point, as a means to carry it out. Without the sincerity to do so, so far this task can be carried out properly. Susabda explained in a sharper perspective, regarding pastoral counseling as the ministry's duty of God's servants.

The problems of human life are becoming more and more complex day by day, and God's servants must realize that routine activities in the church, however perfect, still do not solve the problem. Servants of God must be ready to accept and help personally for the sake of their congregations who come with difficulties and problems in their lives, even they should use means such as visits to approach and offer counseling services to them, who are often dealing with problems in their lives. less courageous and have not found a reason to get counseling from their pastor.

Many servants of God do not realize that pastoral counseling is so unique, it lies in the attitude of God's servants who believe that service is a service entrusted by God. Without God's trust, God's servants may be attracted by secular shadows in carrying out this ministry. Also, servants of God who are not aware that they are specially called servants of God or pastors, actually have directly received a very strategic position in the world of counseling.

An American study presented how people go for help in dealing with life's difficulties.

- 42% come to God's servant
- 29% to general practitioners
- 10% to psychiatrists and psychiatrists
- 13% to social workers
- 6% to lawyer
- 1% to teachers, police, judges and so on.

Of course, there are many reasons and motivations, namely that people look to God's servants to help solve their problems. Seido Ogawa quoted by Subsada gave several reasons:

- a. The church in any community exists as a symbol available help
- b. Clergy is available at not cost (free Pastor's service)
- c. Traditional roles: Church door always open to anyone who wishes to come; church symbolizes care for people: church often hope beyond ordinary human resources. (Usually, the church door is always wide open for people who need help even the church can promise things more than on other sources).

Thus, the servants of God or the priests and Pastors need to prepare themselves as well as possible in their pastoral counseling service, because the congregation really needs and expects responsible pastoral counseling, because this is the duty of their ministry.

It is true that based on this pastoral counseling service, it is not easy to turn the right hand, because of the difficulties experienced by the pastor or congregation, but the joy in this ministry is still beautiful, as in Collins's opinion as follows:

Counseling can be very difficult, time-consuming and verbose, but it can also be a wonderful experience for both the counselor and the counselee. Someone who is sincere in helping others, of course, will experience deep joy if he can help lighten the burden of people who only think about their own needs and satisfaction.

III. Result and Discussion

3.1 Pastoral Counseling: Duties which Must be prepared and H current D is carried out

a. Functions, Focus and Characteristics of Pastoral Counseling

In order to have a broad understanding of Pastoral Counseling -- as a duty and responsibility of a servant of God that must be prepared seriously and carried out wholeheartedly, the author invites to look at its function, focus, and characteristics of counseling in the servant of God as a Christian counselor.

Function

Howard Clinebell, an expert in Pastoral Counseling sees several functions of pastoral counseling, which are relevant by Martin Van Bek in the Indonesian context.

1. Cure function; can help the counselee to heal his heart from mental stress, which usually causes psychosomatic diseases such as ulcers, high blood pressure, heart and so on.
2. Support function; In this function, good attendance and non-verbal communication of the counselor helps a lot, because usually the counselee is very difficult to talk to through deep conversation.
3. guiding function; Indonesian counsees tend to expect this function, because they want a way out of their problems. This guiding function should appear in an effort to help the counselee to make decisions about his own life.
4. Improve relationships; communication difficulties are usually a fundamental problem; communication improvements need to be adapted to the circumstances and culture of the counselee.
5. nurturing/maintaining; the counselor should not give too much advice to the counselee, but still emphasize the responsibility of the counselee in helping himself to live on his own.

Focus

Before listening to the focus of pastoral counseling that needs to be done in the Indonesian context, it is necessary to first look at some of the problems that usually complicate the pastoral counseling process in Indonesia, namely:

1. Counseling tends to only come once/twice.
2. Sometimes the counselee only comes when the problem is too big (e.g., courtship between religions that has been running continuously for several years).
3. Counselors I expect too much from the counselor in a short period of time.
4. Counsees are often unable to open up and cannot speak concretely about their problems (fear of having their secrets exposed, embarrassed, especially in family counseling).
5. Language problems (especially in determining the level of language between counselors and counsees in Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese, and so on).
6. Differences between tribes
7. The difference between rural and urban people
8. The existence of differences in theological background between counselors and counsees can threaten the balance of counseling.
9. Difficulty in discussing topics such as politics, religion and sex
10. There is no uniform understanding of P asoral Counseling.

From these problems, Martin Van Beek proposes the focus in holding pastoral counseling in Indonesia.

1. Focus on the condition of the counselee; The situation of the counselee is certainly different, so it is not wise if the counselor immediately assumes that he already knows what the counselee needs. In this case, the counselor is expected to pay close attention to the counselee's condition as a condition to take a special approach.
2. Focus on the counselee's personality; each counselee has a unique personality, the counselee's personality in Indonesia is certainly greatly influenced by his or her cultural background, this is what is important to be considered in the pastoral counseling process.
3. Focus on the client's culture; every situation of social interaction will produce meaning, and affect thinking, as well as the counselee 's emotional and motivational ways in counseling so that it needs special attention from the counselor.
4. Focus on the chronology of life; Humans are not static, always in the process of changing and developing. Each phase of life will have its own problems, the counselor should be aware of that.
5. Focus on the integrity of human life; Human life is very complex because it contains many aspects. Physical aspects, mental or psychological aspects, socio-economic aspects. Socio-cultural aspects, family social aspects and spiritual/spiitual aspects, these aspects need to be considered by the counselor to his counselee.

3.2 Characteristic features

Regarding the characteristics of counseling, Gunarsa explained as follows based on the opinion of Patterson, namely:

1. Counseling is concerned with deliberately influencing behavioral changes in some part of the client's personality.
2. The goal of counseling is to create conditions that facilitate intentional change in some clients.
3. As with all relationships, the client must have discussions.
4. Conditions that facilitate behavior change are obtained through interviews.
5. Listening must be in counseling, but not all counseling is listening.
6. The counselor must understand the client.
7. Counseling is done in a closed way (privacy) and the discussion is confidential (confidential).

From these characteristics, it can at least be reminiscent of the time of God's servants that Pastoral Counseling ministers are not just giving advice to troubled congregations.

In pastoral counseling services, there must be special characteristics for God's servants to distinguish between Christian counselors and secular counselors. Some of the important characteristics of Christian counselors are described by Collins as follows:

First, a Christian must have good spirituality. Second, a Christian must be gentle (Galatians 6:1). Third, Christian counselors must be humble and willing to help lighten the load (Galatians 6:2). Fourth, Christian counselors must be humble. Fifth, a Christian counselor must be patient. Sixth, a Christian counselor must be diligent in doing good (Galatians 6:10), and the author, adding as a seventh, Christian counselors must have a good relationship with God.

3.3 Appropriate Pastoral Counseling Methods

Counseling methods are quite diverse, their use is also given the freedom according to their ability to use the method. Likewise, pastors can use one or a combination of the various counseling methods available. For example, there is a final project research from seminary students who concluded that congregation pastors in the area Indonesia,

especially in Java, tends to prefer the " Client-centered " method of counseling that is centered on the counselee.

However, to make it easier for the author to direct in three major points adapted from the opinion of Aart Martin Van Beek.

1. Pressure on feelings

In this case, the counselor should not use a directive/directive approach because the goal is to encourage the counseling to express his feelings through the expression of his true feelings. The counselor must not advise or rebuke the counsellor, he must actively listen. If this approach is used, the counseling process must be followed until the end, until the counselee finds himself truly. According to Martin Van Beek, Indonesian tribes who are available and happy to express their feelings include the Batak people and the Ambonese.

2. Stress on the mind

Cognition precedes emotion, he will pay attention to the thinking patterns of a counselor to be able to find ways of thinking that cause the counselee to have problems. Usually, the counselor's duties in this approach are:

- Finding illogical/rational thoughts, beliefs and interpretations in the counselee.
- Holding the counselee to know the thoughts, beliefs and interpretations.
- Invite counseling through challenges and questions to adjust views so that negative feelings can be reduced

According to Martin Van Beek, Balinese, Javanese, and also Chinese people like this cognitive approach, because they feel better free to express their deepest feelings in a counselor.

3. Emphasis on motivation in relation to behavior.

In this approach, humans behave with motivation and get affection, also self-esteem. In this counseling approach, the counselor has the following tasks, namely:

- Pay attention to the counselee's behavior
- counselee to have that behavior to get affection with self-respect
- Explain to the counselee that the way to get love and self-esteem is not working.
- With the counselee has a healthy and positive behavior to gain affection and self-esteem.

According to Martin Van Beek, this is suitable for young people who are looking for self-esteem in a group of addicts or with other counseling that pays attention to behavior that is unacceptable to society, what is important in this method approach is to accept the counselee as he is, but reject his behavior.

It has been widely recognized above that Pastoral Counseling depends on the type of problem present, the personality of the person helping and being helped, and the nature of their relationship. W right, based on the instructions of Egan and Brammer, recommends five steps in carrying out the Pastoral Counseling process, most of which are clearly described in the Bible:

1. Building a relationship between the helper and the helper (John 16:7-13)
2. Investigate the problem, try to explain the problem and find out what has been done in the past to solve the problem.
3. Determine what action to take. There may be several alternatives that can be tried one at a time (John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:13).
4. Encourage actions that are evaluated jointly by the person helping and the person being helped. If something fails, try again (John 16:13; Acts 10:19, 20; 16:6).
5. End the counseling relationship and encourage the person being helped to apply what he or she has learned as he begins to walk forward on his own (Romans 8:14).

According to Alouw, Christian activist and counselor living in Bandung gave his argument regarding a counseling process, namely the need to build a relationship with the counselee, and start with prayer, both at the opening of the counseling practice and at the end (Alouw, 1995, p. 37). With the same description, it is also mentioned the importance of the presence of a counselor who at least provides motivation for the counselee, at least also reduces the pressure he is facing. Moreover, just experiencing a very deep crisis, or depression all at once.

This may be a concern for anyone who serves in a church context, especially ministers of God, because before starting or practicing counseling, attending, or starting with prayer beforehand will determine the next satisfying outcome. According to Alouw, the attitude of a counselor also plays an important role in achieving the ongoing counseling goals. For someone who is accustomed to practicing counseling, a counselor will avoid being quick to judge, unsympathetic, or offensive, indifferent to his counselee (1995: pp. 37-38).

3.4 Pastoral Counseling Breakthroughs in the Future

Through the discussion at the beginning, the author would like to propose breakthroughs for Pastoral Counseling services in the future in the Indonesian situation for churches in Indonesia.

- Need to increase understanding of pastoral counseling services, either through books or additional education.
- Comparative study with pastors who have done regular pastoral counseling.
- Collaborating with other pastors to form a “counseling center” (rayon or region), where members of the congregation can meet their pastor in the area without feeling visited by the condition of the church or community. Registrar can exchange ideas with other colleagues.
- The need to publish journals or publications about pastoral counseling services regularly or periodically to pastors.
- Open a special program of Christian/pastoral counseling at the seminary to bring insight and horizons of thought for pastors.
- Seminars or the like that refer to the needs of pastoral counseling services
- Pastors can divide the work of pastoral counseling to their assistants, for example counseling for family problems to pastors, counseling for youth to assistants (Youth Pastor) and so on.

IV. Conclusion

Pastoral counseling is the duty and responsibility of a pastor / pastor. This ministry cannot be set aside in the ministry of the church, because it is closely related to the task of the pastor who must shepherd his people with love and prayer.

The church also needs to take a critical attitude to provide pastoral counseling services, while still prioritizing the pastor as the main servant in this pastoral counseling service. And making the Bible a source of solving problems in the counselee's life, in this section the counselor plays an important role in the counseling process, that's why in the context of the church, the pastor or servant of God is obliged to master the entire contents of the Bible to link the problems of the counselee's life with events in the Bible (read: nats or verses).

This task should not only rest on the shoulders of pastors or pastors, but anyone who is involved in the church, even the congregation, as long as they have attended counseling trainings, and in particular the counselor has been born again, is worthy and can be counted on to help the local church. local.

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