

The following are 12 testimonials we have received from our clients. It is our desire to help you understand the ministry accomplished in our office.

**FROM A COUPLE WHO NEEDED MARRIAGE COUNSELING:**

Many people in the world view therapy as a weakness. I was one of those people. I thought I could fix anything, or I could just pray and it would get better. Praying is amazing and a key factor in healing and miracles. However now I see that God has placed others around as His hands and feet to help us in our daily lives and for those times that we are so far down we see no way out. Therapy is not a weakness; in fact it takes strength to realize you need someone to come alongside you and help put together the broken pieces of your life.

The Church of God Center for Ministerial Care has become a Godsend in our marriage. Two years ago our marriage could have gone one of two ways; in divorce and a broken family, or in a testimonial as to how God restores that which is broken. Dr. Maness has guided us into healthy communication, healthy boundaries, as well as good listening skills. With his monthly, sometimes weekly, sessions we have learned to see disagreements through the other’s sight. Dr. Maness has helped guide us back to bathing everything in prayer and understanding why we may do the things we do. There have been countless resources he has given for us to read and glean knowledge from.

I have no words that could truly describe the thankfulness we have to Dr. Maness and the Church of God Center for Ministerial Care. They have been God’s hands and feet in restoring this marriage and family, which in turn will benefit the Kingdom of God as we share our testimony to others so they may know the unending love Christ has for all his children.

**FROM A COUPLE WHO LOST A CHILD:**

My wife and I visited the Office of Ministerial Care for counseling.

From the moment we walked into the office we felt the warmth, love and compassion of the entire team. The office was relaxing and inviting. Everyone made us feel welcome and at ease.

It has been a very difficult time in our lives after losing our firstborn son. Although we know that the pain of our loss will forever remain with us, your wise counsel has given us a new perspective and helpful insights to face the days ahead.

We’ll always appreciate the high professionalism and confidentially that you along with your team demonstrated to us. Tantamount to that, we will never forget the love and compassionate care my wife and I received during those two days. Thanks for our lovely dinner for two. My wife and I were able to enjoy a night out on the town along with some well need R&R.

I truly recommend Church of God pastors to make use of all the services that the Office of Ministerial Care provides.

Please convey our love to Donna who is such an exceptional blessing to your staff. May God bless you as you continue to provide loving support to all ‘battle-worn’ soldiers of the Gospel.

**FROM A PASTOR’S DAUGHTER:**

Growing up in a pastor’s home can cause a stressful childhood. You see the good, the bad, the ugly not only in the church but how it affects the home as well. You are seen as an example to the church people and the pressure to be “perfect” is sometimes overwhelming. I have grown up in the Church of God all my life and most of my life we have been pastors at various churches. We always had our challenges and rough times, but we always got through these moments together as a family with God at the center.

After I turned 18 years old, I started struggling mentally and spiritually in all aspects of life. I had just graduated high school, the stress of finding what comes next, and my family was making a big move to pastor in a different part of the state. Life became this never-ending cycle of change that was too big for me to control. After the big move I found myself content where I was, but I still struggled with who I was and why was I here. I had created friendships with the youth at our new church and I was getting better.

Our second year at our church was when COVID 19 hit and we all went into shut down mode. This was a hard season for everyone, but as someone who hates change, fears the unknown, and gets anxious when routine is disrupted this felt like a fall back. It was during this season that I started my journey with the counseling sessions with Dr. Maness.

I was hesitant at first to reach out for help because I thought I could do it all on my own. Dr. Maness helped me by just listening at first and giving me small resources to add to my daily life. He pointed out what I was already doing right and helped me see that sometimes all you need is to slow down and break things into smaller tasks. When I first started our sessions they were once a week, then once every other week, to eventually now I am only having a session per year. I loved being able to have not only a Christian guide me in this journey but someone who also understood the aspects of being in a Pastor’s home. We closed each session out with a word of prayer which was refreshing and uplifting. Since my time using this service, I have been able to control my anxiety and other people have seen this transformation in my life as well. I will always be grateful for this service that has helped shape my journey not only as a Christian, a student, and a future nurse but as a pastor’s kid as well.

**FROM A PASTOR/FORMER MISSIONARY:**

I have served as a pastor, worship pastor, youth pastor, even missionary. What I found throughout each of these positions is that stress, anxiety even depression are all very real issues. There is this idea and concept that there is shame in asking for help. I tried to deal on my own with the severity of my depression. I had reached a point where I felt like I was in a tsunami and didn’t know which way was up or down. I felt I could not breathe. Finally, enough was enough so I reached out for help.

At Ministerial Care, I finally began my healing process. The first step was accepting I had an issue, and it was okay to get help. The sessions helped me to find the causes, but more importantly taught me how to change my mindset. Today, I know how to deal better with everyday stress and know how to love each day to its fullest. Ministerial Care helped to save my life and is there for all church of God ministers including missionaries. They are making the difference and I’m so proud they were there for me.

**FROM A PASTOR’S WIFE:**

Just a little insight of this journey of how we ended up here. When we surrendered to being called into this ministry, there has been a roller coaster ride of thrills, laughs, hurts and so much more. And like others I’m sure, at times we were ready to throw in the towel. Each and every role in the ministry is so important. It takes all of them to function but being a pastor’s wife is challenging to say the least. We see so much more behind the scenes that many never even know about, because they have become so good at hiding it. But there is One that nothing is hidden from, and there will come a time in the brokenness of being burned out it becomes exposed. And that is exactly what happened to us. I have to say we give thanks to have a Bishop that sees the needs and truly listens to the hearts of these pastors, and it was that one God appointment that led us to Dr. Tim.

We spent a weekend at a ministerial conference in our region, and it was there that so many doors opened up. There are not enough words to express how much this was needed. My husband just wants to serve, and we are a team. But he, like others, has to be bi-vocational. At times it is very stressful; to try to grow a church and support a family, not to mention all the things that go on with the hurts of the broken and wanting to do all you can for them. You find yourself asking “Am I really called to serve? It shouldn’t be this hard.” It is heartbreaking to see ones so broken themselves and that they are doing more harm than good. This can be a critical place in your ministry and an example of how important it is to take care of yourself and help being available to people when they feel like giving up is their only option. We have been there, and it is still a process of healing.

It was a huge blessing, and I was so thankful when my husband started meeting with Dr. Tim through Zoom calls. It truly saved him and has done so much for us. It’s been almost a year and half and I’ve seen so much take place because a trust was built through this process, a confidence to be able to confide in someone that takes their time to listen and get down to what we always speak on. You’ve got to get to the root of this burned-out place. It is easy to speak it, but you have to live it to be able to grow. God has placed people like Dr. Tim to make a difference if we just take the time.

The sessions started out with just my husband and then I joined several and had my one on one. What makes this so great is that even though we want to help each other, sometimes it takes that neutral person standing in the gap. I hope and pray people realize how important it is to take care of yourself. We are uncertain as to where our journey is right now but are holding onto faith. We know without a doubt we have an incredible support system with Dr. Tim. He saw us at our worst and now sees a healing taking place from the inside out. To be able to take a deep breath and not have it hurt speaks so much. No words can express how humbled we are and can’t wait to see where it’s taking us. We just want to say thank you, Dr. Tim, you are making a difference and this ministry is so needed.

**FROM A PASTOR:**

I am a Church of God pastor. I would like to share a small portion of my testimony concerning the Ministerial Care program. The ministry played a very big part of my breakthrough in my lowest valley. I would like to share that the ministers around and above me truly were a blessing.

After many difficult events unfolded in a small window of time, it became more than I could bear. Unfortunately, I have trust issues already and things around me are not improving. I eventually lost all hope and the will to even live. As I began to have health problems, I found myself at times not really caring if I was told a bad diagnosis because that was what I was used to. However, God has a way of putting all the pieces in place.

After reaching out to my district overseer, he was resourceful and supportive along with the ministerial care team. Dr Tim Maness was the obedient servant to answer the call to truly care to restore the wounded. Once I was connected and after just a few short sessions, I truly had an awakening that is changing my life to this day.

However due to time, I wanted to share the importance of this ministry. I did not know anything about it and have never heard of it, but it is the best kept secret I have ever heard. In a season of confusion and frustration I missed a couple of sessions via skype, but the team were so kind and helpful.

The point I would like to make is that I truly believe ministers should be strongly encouraged to connect with this ministry. I would love to tell the whole story later, but I want the focus here to be on the ministry and not me. Yet, I can never express the life changing experience I have encountered. Please take heed of the true need of foundational truths, love of Christ, and the importance of connection. Every story is a testimony, but some never make it to the end to tell it because of brokenness. The ministerial care team has a vital role, and every minister needs to be encouraged to use them as a source of strength for all who are willing. Thank you and God bless.

**FROM A PASTOR WITH BURN-OUT:**

I am a Church of God pastor. I would like to share what the ministry of the Church of God Center for Ministerial Care and Dr. Tim Maness means to me and how it has truly saved my life and well-being.

In 2019 – 2020 I felt I was at the very end. I was not sure where to go or who to trust. I am a bi-vocational pastor with a demanding job. The church my wife and I were pastoring was also very demanding.

While attending a conference sponsored by our region, I came to realize I was experiencing burn-out. I began seeking more direction. While talking with the speaker of our conference, it was suggested I contact Dr. Maness and apply for counseling at the Center for Ministerial Care. I did this and it changed my life.

Before meeting Dr. Tim I felt alone and abandoned. I was on an island, and it seemed no one cared. I was constantly trying to balance family, work and ministry and there was never enough time for me. I was always being told you just have to make time, but I was never given any direction or help. When I talked to other pastors about my challenges as a bi-vocational pastor, they would go silent.

After 1 ½ years meeting with Dr. Tim, my family and I have been given hope and direction. Before this time of counseling began I was damaged and broken. I was headed for disaster. Today, because of this ministry and counselor, we have a renewed outlook.

I cannot stress how thankful we are for the Church of God Center for Ministerial Care and Dr. Tim Maness. I have no doubt there are many ministers in our church who can benefit from this vital ministry.

**FROM A PASTOR WITH ANXIETY & DEPRESSION:**

My name is not important, I am not famous, rich or well known, at least by mankind’s standard. But I am known to the one who knows all, Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior. I have been saved 36 years from a life of drugs, alcohol and jail. I am an Ordained Bishop and a retired COG pastor of 23 yrs.

Here is a verse I want to share:

2 Kings 7:3 AMP

“Now four men who were lepers were at the entrance of the [city's] gate; and they said to one another, "Why should we sit here until we die?”

This verse talks about condition, communication, and togetherness.

At the end of my pastoring ministry in 2020 (I retired disabled), I had physical (old Army injuries) and mental challenges from the pressures of ministry. Being a pastor I told myself, surely I can overcome this attack on my mind. For me it was high level anxiety and moderate depression. Being a pastor is not conducive to sharing one’s struggles. It’s seen as a weakness, or that’s what my mind told me. Men of God have to be strong. But that’s not even the Biblical picture: Elijah, depression, a lot of bad choices; Peter, denial; Paul’s questions; all show a different picture. Everyone, at times struggles, some to a crippling reality.

As the verse I shared at the beginning says, four men had to make a choice to stay where they were or go behind the gate. At about 2 years after my retirement, I reached out to the COG Center for Ministerial Care. I had to do the same thing as the men at the gate, reach out for something better. I started counseling sessions with Dr. Timothy Maness, and over these months I have learned to navigate my anxiety and stress. I have learned what precursors are and how to avoid them. Like Dr. Maness said, I was holding on to too much and was feeling responsible for way more than I should have. I was also carrying too much guilt over my past mistakes in pastoral work. I had to make a choice to reach out and it has been the best decision of my life. I’m happy, fulfilled, and looking at life after pastoring not as a failure, but as an opportunity to stay active in ministry wherever I can help.

Thank your Dr. Maness I love you sir and thank God for the department of Ministerial Care. My life is different because I reached for the gate of counseling.

**FROM A PASTOR FEELING LIKE HE WASN’T ENOUGH FOR HIS CONGREGATION:**

I'm a husband, father, and licensed minister with the COG.

I'm 48 years old and have been in ministry alongside my wife for 23 years. We currently serve as pastors.

Like most pastors during the pandemic,  we suffered a lot of loss. Loss personally from the passing of friends and loved ones, as well as the separation from many church families who never returned to church after Covid 19 began to settle down.

The emotional weight of not feeling like I was enough of a leader sent me down months and months of fear-driven choices. I unfortunately was not healthy physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually. I tried to camouflage my pain, depression, and anxiety with staying busy at the church. I pretended to be ok for fear that letting someone know how low I had gotten would alarm my congregation.

My relationship with my wife and two children, which had been strong for years, was very much deteriorating.

I had witnessed friends in ministry lose their marriages, family, church and self to the overwhelming pressure that comes from being a pastor.

My wife and I discussed how important it was to seek out someone to talk to. Through discussions with trusted mentors, I learned of the care ministry and counseling that the Church Of God provides. It was something I was nervous about pursuing to begin with, but knew I needed to do so.

 My bi-weekly zoom sessions with Dr. Tim Maness have been a very helpful experience for me. Processing and talking through some of my life issues with him, as well as praying and implementing his Godly advice, has been extremely life giving, as me and my family navigate trouble differently than before.

Constructing boundaries for rest, counseling, exercise, meditation have benefited me and my life greatly the last two months. I would highly encourage anyone who wants to regain their peace, self-value and joy to take advantage of the incredible ministry provided by Dr. Tim and his team. My heart feels passionate again about life, family and ministry.

Serving Him in Everything

**FROM A RETIRED MINISTER:**

If you had told me fifteen years ago that I would be dealing with what I have been through for the last year, that we would separate after 41 years of marriage, I would not have believed it. I felt it was all my fault, but at the same time I could not figure out what I had done or not done.

I knew about Ministerial Care, but thought it was only for Senior Pastors. And then someone told me differently.

I called and talked with Sister Donna, and she had me in to see Dr. Maness in no time. He helped me to open up like a can and release so many things that I had stored up inside. I found that so much of it was not what I had done but was carrying what had been laid on me for so many years.

If it had not been for Ministerial Care, Dr. Maness and Sister Donna, I really think I would not have been here today. I have come a long way. Getting back in the ministry has given me so much to live for. So many things in my life are gone and may never return, but I know God still has me in His arms.

**FROM A MINISTER:**

I had separated from my wife who had an affair and verbally and physically abused me. I was scared, depressed, confused and just broken. A pastor friend had told me about Ministerial Care and that it would help, so I reached out. I was ready to quit since I thought God was done with me and wouldn't use me anymore since I was damaged goods. I wasn't man enough to have my wife not hurt me or cheat on me. I was believing what had been spoken over me and couldn't see past it. Ministerial Care introduced me to Dr. Timothy Maness. He listened to me through my tears and accusing myself and I knew he didn't see me as a lost cause as I had believed I was. Ministerial Care helped me through the hardest time in my life and gave me spiritual advice and skills. They taught me about boundaries and how to grieve and trust God. In the months I was going through counseling, I grew; and being able to talk to someone who is spiritually mature and loving honestly helped so much. This is an amazing resource for ministers. I am so glad it exists.

Thank you all!

**FROM A MINISTER WITH BATTLE SCARS:**

I have been a minister with the Church of God since I was 18, and I’m now in my 40’s. I have been doing online counseling with Dr. Maness for the last 8 months, and it has helped immeasurably.

Over the years, I’ve earned a few battle scars from ministry, and it has affected my marriage, my family, and my emotions. Dr. Maness has helped me to understand how to effectively channel my feelings, deal with crisis moments better, and cool my anger and frustration.

As a result, my communication with my wife and children has improved, my satisfaction in my current ministry assignment has risen, and God is preparing our family for the next assignment.

I would encourage any fellow minister to reach out if you’re having any level of difficulty. I was one of those “I know what I need to do” kind of guys, but having someone to talk to and hold me accountable, that’s not my best friend or another local minister has put me on the path to healing and wholeness. You have the time, and you need to make the time to do this. It just takes laying down one’s ego and doing what is best for yourself, your family, and your ministry.

You’ll be glad you did!