

## **Guidelines for Offering Advice**

Be cautious in what wisdom you share and how you share it. Remember we do not want to cause a person to become dependent on us.

**Spiritual Advice:** As a Spiritual Coach you should be mainly giving chatters spiritual advice - pointing them to Jesus, the Bible, and involvement in a church. Make sure your advice agrees with the Groundwire [Statement of Faith](#).

**Other Advice:** Chatters come online with varied issues that they want to discuss. All of these issues affect their spiritual walk and perception of spirituality, so many of them do need to be addressed - we just need to be very careful how we do so. All of our advice needs to be based on specific scriptures or scriptural principles.

**Legal Advice:** We must not give any legal advice; we need to listen sympathetically and suggest they seek advice from experts (The Police, A lawyer, etc.).

**Medical Advice:** We must not give specific medical advice; we need to listen sympathetically and suggest they talk to their doctor or an emergency medical service. We must not promise that God will heal them - we don't know whether he plans to or not. We need to also recommend that they make healthcare decisions with their doctor, so it is the doctor and the chatter together who makes any choices and decisions.

**Family Advice:** Remember that we have only heard one side of the story. We need to listen sympathetically. It may be appropriate to suggest ways of improving communication between all parties, but we need to be very careful to help them to make their own decisions rather than making decisions for them. It is often good to suggest that they talk to someone face to face - maybe someone at a church or a counselor.

**Financial Advice:** Do not give specific advice about investing or spending money; suggest they get advice from a professional. Please also remember that the whole issue of tithing is not a part of the Groundwire [Statement of Faith](#); we must acknowledge that Christians have different views on this non-salvific issue.

**Church Advice:** Groundwire does not represent one particular denomination, and when you are online you represent Groundwire. When you are serving as a Groundwire coach, you do not represent your denomination. However, we do have churches that have agreed to reach out intentionally to chatters that want a church. This is a wonderful opportunity to not just send someone somewhere, but responsibly try to put them into the best scenario for them to succeed in knowing God.

**Dealing with Sin:** We must deal with sin directly, but lovingly. The smallest of sins separates us from God. Some sins are naturally more revolting to our sensibilities than others, but we

cannot allow this bias to affect our treatment of the individual. We must look at people as Christ looked at them. He didn't shrink away from the known sinners of the day, but He sought to display His love to them. His harshest words were always reserved for those who called attention to their standards of righteous living. Conversely, His most tender words were to those who were broken and wrecked by sin. We must be Christ-like in this regard. We deal with sin by identifying it for what it is biblically while still maintaining a strong message of Christ's love for the person caught in the sin.

**Stick to our Statement of Faith:** Please be definite in your answers to questions where the issue is covered by our [Statement of Faith](#). When you are asked to chat about something pertaining to God or Church practice that isn't covered by the Statement of Faith, you must express that Groundwire doesn't have a fixed opinion on this topic. Because Christians have different views on this subject, you may then ask them if they would like your personal opinion, but you must be careful not to push this particular view.

**Controversial Topics:** We must take care when expressing a strong opinion on a controversial issue. We can take the topic of baptism as an example. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that baptism is necessary for salvation and that an infant that is baptized is regenerated and given spiritual new life. This is contrary to our [Statement of Faith](#) which teaches that we are saved through faith in Christ. If the chatter expresses that they are saved simply because they were baptized as a baby, it is important to explain that this is not true. There are, however, many Christians that believe that infant baptism brings a child under the 'Covenant blessing' of the family of God (just as the Israelite boys were circumcised to enter the 'Covenant' as part of God's special people). Groundwire does not hold an official opinion on this teaching as it is not part of our [Statement of Faith](#).

**Prophecy, Pictures, & Words from God:** Do not give specific prophecies or words for the chatter. Do not directly tell the chatter that you have a message from God for them.

**Making Promises for God:** We need to be very careful before making promises for God. For example, please don't tell the chatter that God is definitely going to change their circumstances in the way you have just prayed. You don't know how God will answer the prayer.

**Deliverance, Demons, & the Devil:** Avoid bringing demons into a conversation, and do not introduce the subject of deliverance or the possibility of demonic activity into the person's life. Our chats should be focused on Jesus, not on the devil. If you believe that demons are a problem in a particular situation, please do not say this directly, instead encouraging the chatter to speak to a church leader near where they live. It would be wrong for us to worry the chatter with the things we say. For instance, if a chatter has depression, emotional, or mental health problems, the word *deliverance* should not be used when talking to them, or when praying for them online.