

MILITARY

Deployment

by Chaplain (CPT) Guy Maness and Rachel Maness

Deployment is tough on the entire family even in the best of circumstances. Hardship is part of what makes the sacrifice of armed services members and their families such an honorable calling. But a military family can stay connected to each other before, during and after deployment.

PRE-DEPLOYMENT: Create

From the moment those ominous orders are received a flood of anxiety, grief, and fear is likely to flow. Don't ignore these feelings. Acknowledge and talk about them openly with each other and with the children. Guide the kids through the process of writing down the biggest concerns, and then commit to pray for one another throughout the deployment.

Before deployment create a "Deployment Book" to store any memories that happen throughout the separation. Come up with specific strategies for staying connected with your family (i.e. writing letters, Skype, pre-recorded Bible readings). Come up with a mutually agreed upon plan for marital intimacy (i.e. Skype dates, read & discuss the same daily devotional, plan creative alternatives to physical intimacy). Most importantly, resolve any tensions in your relationship. Prolonged separation can make marital problems worse and create greater vulnerability to temptation while apart.

DEPLOYMENT: Connect

Deployment brings big changes for the family. Your spouse must carry the load at home in a "man down" situation. Their burden of responsibility has just increased dramatically, and life doesn't slow down to let them catch up.

Connection is key at this point. Follow through with any plans you created during the pre-deployment phase or create a plan now. Family members at home need to feel they are a part of what the deployed soldier is doing. He/she should be open as possible about the experience within OPSEC regulations.

The spouse at home may feel less comfortable in the same church community settings now that the spouse is away. That's okay. At the same time, resist the urge to withdraw. Give fellow believers the blessing of serving you and your heroic spouse, something they can only do if they know specifics. Maintain a list of practical helps that you can share in response to the vague offer "If there is anything I can do, don't hesitate to ask."

RETURNING HOME: Communicate

This phase usually starts off with a burst of excitement and energy, as you return from deployment. But when the dust settles it becomes clear that things have changed. The hole left by the absent service member has been filled by necessity and survival for the remaining family members. This phenomenon can lead to marital tension as couples try to re-establish their "normal life" roles. Communication is the key during this phase. Share and listen. Be open with each other. Re-establish regular date nights and family nights. Pray with and for each other often.

Deployments are difficult. But they do not have to permanently scar relationships or family life dynamics. In fact, in many cases it can strengthen them if the couple chooses to be intentional up front.

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GOING FURTHER

RESOURCES

God Strong: A Military Wife's Spiritual Survival Guide by Sara Horn

Provides stories, wisdom and anecdotes of wives from all branches of service that remind readers God is in control, you can have joy no matter what, and God knows where you hurt.

Faith Deployed: Daily Encouragement for Military Wives by Jocelyn Green

Offers a collection of devotions that address the challenges wives face when their husbands are away protecting our freedom. The foundation of this devotional is the unchanging character of God even amidst the shifting circumstances of a military family.

The Five Love Languages: Military Edition by Gary Chapman & Jocelyn Green

Helps military couples confidently grow closer through the unique challenges they face - including deployment, reintegration, combat trauma, and more.

WATERLOO ROAD SUPPORT

Small Groups

Small groups are available on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Small groups provide a time to study God's Word while fellowshiping with other adults who are in the same life stages.

Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministers are lay caregivers who are carefully matched with care receivers by gender and pertinent life experiences. They are supervised by the church and work in strict confidence. Contact the church offices at 405.341.9024 for a confidential conversation about connecting to our Stephen Ministry

Professional Counseling

Contact the church offices at 405.341.9024 for a list of Christ-centered professional counselors.

Practical Needs

For assistance with practical needs, contact the church offices at 405.341.9024

