

Military Deployment

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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.

PHASE 1: 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 them 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 children (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.

PHASE 2: Deployment (Connect)

Deployment brings big changes for the family. Your spouse must carry the load at home in a "man down" situation. The 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."

PHASE 3: 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.

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Free copies are available to Active Duty and mobilized Reserve military families. Visit the [HomePointe Center](http://HomePointe.org) or email homepointe@lakepointe.org

God Strong: A Military Wife's Spiritual Survival Guide (by Sara Horn) Sara also provides online support for military wives at wivesoffaith.org

Faith Deployed: Daily Encouragement for Military Wives (by Jocelyn Green)

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

Connection Tips: Get ideas for long-distance intimacy and family connection while deployed at homepointe.org/military

GOING FURTHER – Lake Pointe Support

The following opportunities at **Lake Pointe Church** may prove especially helpful to military families during deployment.

iCampus

You can continue to worship with Lake Pointe Church during deployment regardless of location. Visit lakepointe.org/live to learn about our internet campus.

Life Groups

Connecting to a community of believers for encouragement and practical support is vital for the spouse of a deployed soldier. To find a group visit lakepointe.org/connect or email homepointe@lakepointe.org to request assistance meeting a leader who can get you connected.

ReEngage

Before or after deployment would be a great time to invest in strengthening your marital relationship. The ReEngage ministry helps couples move toward oneness through stories of grace, teaching and small groups. Visit lakepointe.org/reengage for details.

4:19 – Lake Pointe Student Ministries

In an effort to come alongside parents, Lake Pointe Church sponsors a range of ministries for teens. Visit the website at fournineteen.com to explore opportunities for getting your child connected to one of our student pastors.

Counseling and Support

The Lake Pointe Counseling Center provides a variety of opportunities for support in facing life's hurts and hang-ups. Discover details of upcoming support groups and other services at lakepointe.org/heal.

Practical Needs

For assistance with practical needs that arise during deployment ask for the Benevolence Ministries office when you call the church office at 469.698.2200.

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