



# Parenting During Deployments

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## Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness

**Physical:** *Performing and excelling in physical activities that require aerobic fitness, endurance, strength, healthy body composition and flexibility derived through exercise, nutrition and training. The physical dimension also includes sleep, activity, and nutrition to improve personal and unit performance, resilience and readiness.*

**Social:** *Developing and maintaining trusted, valued relationships and friendships that are personally fulfilling and foster good communication including a comfortable exchange of ideas, views, and experiences.*

**Family:** *Being part of a family unit that is safe, supportive and loving, and provides the resources needed for all members to live in a healthy and secure environment.*

**Emotional:** *Approaching life's challenges in a positive, optimistic way by demonstrating self-control, stamina and good character with your choices and actions.*

**Spiritual:** *One's purpose, core values, beliefs, identity, and life vision. These elements, which define the essence of a person, enable one to build inner strength, make meaning of experiences, behave ethically, persevere through challenges, and be resilient when faced with adversity. An individual's spirituality draws upon personal, philosophical, psychological, and/or religious teachings, and forms the basis of their character.*

## Deployment Phases

			Post-Deployment	
Pre-Deployment	Deployment	Reunion	Reintegration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear</li> <li>• Anger</li> <li>• Denial</li> <li>• Resentment</li> <li>• Excitement</li> <li>• Guilt</li> <li>• "Big Chill"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relief</li> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Enthusiasm</li> <li>• Pride</li> <li>• Sense of Abandonment</li> <li>• Eating / sleeping changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Guilt</li> <li>• Fear</li> <li>• Excitement</li> <li>• Elation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Euphoria</li> <li>• Resentment</li> <li>• Role Confusion</li> <li>• Displaced</li> <li>• Un-needed</li> </ul>	

## Children's Responses

	Ages	Behaviors	Moods
Infants	<1	Won't eat, more fussy	Less energy or interest in things
Toddlers	1-3	Tantrums, cries, acting out	Grumpy, angry, sad
Preschool	3-6	Potty accidents, clings, won't sleep	Sad, moody, frustrated
School Age	6-12	Whines, acts out for attention	Grumpy, moody, sad
Teenagers	12-18	Isolates, turns to peers, takes risks	Anger, depression, apathetic

## Ten Principles of Parenting During Deployment

**Principle 1:** Make God the priority and center of it all.

### Scripture:

*And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. Deut 10:12-14*

*"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." Rev 1:8*

*I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5*

### Practice:

Find time just to be with God ... not as an afterthought, but as a priority. Give Him your first and best. Make your time with God the first thing you do every morning. Even if you go to bed late, chose to rise before your children in order to have time with God. The extra hour of sleep would not make up for the kind of strength you get from being with God.

Whether it is an hour or some days it may be 5 minutes. Dedicate yourself to being with God. Reading scripture, worshiping or sitting still before the Lord and receiving from Him. Crying out or hearing what He has to say. Each day will be different, but He will direct your day clearly when you make time for Him. He loves our hearts that earnestly seek him.

**Principle 2:** Prepare your hearts in prayer before the deployment.

**Scripture:**

*But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you. Psalm 5:11*

*The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him. Psalm 28:7*

**Practice:**

Set prayer as a way of life in your family. Don't allow your children to be surprised that you are praying ... as if it was the first time they have seen you pray. Pray with your children. Pray for all things ... but pray specifically for the deployment, regardless of the stage.

Set aside time for your children to pray by themselves ... then discuss. Have kids write prayers in their journals.

Pray over the phone / internet when communicating with the deployed parent.

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**Principle 3:** Parenting (including parenting during separation) **begins** with the husband-wife relationship:

**Scripture:**

*That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. Genesis: 2:24.*

*Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Eph 5:19-21*

*However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Eph 5:33.*

**Practice:**

Speak words of affirmation with your spouse. Act with love and respect. Pray specifically for your spouse during the deployment ... be a praying wife and a praying husband.

Remember that you are setting an example for your children. Sometimes our children learn more by watching than they do by listening! Here are some questions to ask yourself: Do your children see you reading your Bible and praying? Are you being their example of faith to draw near to God (James 4:8), to allow God to be your refuge (Psalm 141:8), and to allow Him to be your source of joy (Habakkuk 3:18) in spite of your circumstances? Your Godly example will impact their journey of faith and their everyday life. Keep a picture of your spouse near your Bible!

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**Principle 4:** Teach your children about the sovereignty of God.

**Scripture:**

*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:11-13*

*He uses all things for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).*

*And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Eph 6:18*

**Practice:**

Teach your children to turn their concerns or fears into prayer.

Deliberately offer words daily to assure your children that the deployment is in God's hands.

Pray specific blessings over your children

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**Principle 5:** Discuss God's purpose for this deployment

**Scripture:**

*Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path* Psalm 119:105  
*He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.* 1 Thess 5:24

**Practice:**

Designate a family verse (e.g. Matt 5:16).  
Locate the country to which the military member is deployed in an atlas and learn all you can about it and its people. Pray for that country.  
Seek and expect the blessing of the word (*Rhema*) of God regarding the deployment ... allow it to be the anchor.

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**Principle 6:** Parenting during deployment is an extension of parenting while at home ...

**Scripture:**

*Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.* Prov 22:6

*Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.* Psalm 55:11

*I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.* 3 John 4.

*For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.* Eph 3:14-19

*When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.* 1 Cor 13:11

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and hum-*

*ble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

**Practice:**

Take time now to reflect on your parenting ...  
Allow the Holy Spirit to be part of this deployment ...  
Cast your burdens on the Lord ...  
Receive and extend God’s grace

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**Principle 7:** Parenting during deployments has common and unique challenges ...

Common ..

- Physical separation
- Emotional loneliness (absence of loved one)
- Less direct communication
- Shift in parenting responsibilities (how to manage this)

Uniqueness

- Life situations
- Time apart
- Communication availability

**Scripture:**

*... May the Lord keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other. Gen 31:49*

*By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures. The wise prevail through great power, and those who have knowledge muster their strength. Surely you need guidance to wage war, and victory is won through many advisers. Prov 24:3-6*

**Practice:**

Seek God’s wisdom and guidance in planning for the deployment. Discuss the plan with spouse before divulging to your children.

Seek guidance from experienced advisors; surround yourself with wise counsel  
Keep God in all communications

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**Principle 8:** Walk it with others ...

**Scripture:**

*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Gal 6:2*

*That is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. Rom 1:12*

**Practice:**

Be intentional about finding spiritually mature people to walk along side you

Seek intercessors for covering

Reach out to others ... be a servant

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**Principle 9:** Be prepared for the spiritual battle

**Scripture:**

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10*

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Col 3:12-14*

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your*

*feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Eph 6:10-18*

**Practice:**

Be aware of the spiritual battle  
Be aware of the nature of the enemy  
Put on the Under -Armor of God  
Put on the Armor of God  
Above all else ... stand  
Pray without ceasing!

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**Principle 10:** What if ...

**Scripture:**

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Deut 31:6*

*He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the almighty ... Psalm 91*

*I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you Luke 10:19*

*The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 1 Cor 15:26*

*The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalm 23*

**Practice:**

Speak the word of God out loud!  
Pray with boldness !  
Be strong and courageous !  
Trust in the Lord !



God is with us ... no matter what!

God promises us peace above all understanding!

Jesus is victorious!