

The Battle at Home

MILITARY WIVES LEAN ON THE LORD DURING THEIR OWN STRUGGLES AT HOME

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Photos by Paula Nafziger and U.S. Military



At a recent CC military outreach in Camp Pendleton, CA, a military wife shows off her new son.



photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Kelvin Edwards, U.S. Navy

Navy Petty Officer 1st Class John Marsh greets his daughter and wife during the homecoming of the submarine USS Scranton to Naval Station Norfolk, VA.

But I will sing of Your power ... of Your mercy in the morning; for You have been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises; for God is my defense, my God of mercy.

Psalm 59:16-17

Fear From Afar

What a blessing it was to see him. He wasn't within hugging distance; he wasn't even within driving distance, but modern technology had brought U.S. Marine Lt. Col. Steve Wilson into his family's living room as he stood half a world away serving his country in Iraq.

His online, video chat over the computer with wife Betty and their three young children—Ashley, Heather, and Hunter—was comforting for the entire family until the reality of war struck home.

"All of a sudden his room shook, and I heard the sounds of mortars hitting close by. I sent

the kids out to play. They had no clue what had just happened," Betty recalled.

Trying to reassure his wife, Steve acted like it was completely normal and continued their conversation.

But later that night, when the kids were asleep and she lay alone in bed, Betty remembered: "The reality of what had just occurred finally hit me. Suddenly a fear gripped me like nothing I had ever felt. I knew this couldn't be from God."

Just like the servicemen and women fighting overseas, military spouses often find the enemy close at hand during deployments. For them, attacks often come in the form of loneliness, anxiety, frustration, or fear.

Betty, whose husband has been in the Marine Corps all 14 years of their marriage, has discovered that God's wisdom is her one true strength. The Lord put Acts 17:26 on her heart just before the frightening video chat, and that Scripture has continued to guide her and the rest of the Wilson family who currently reside on base in Camp Lejeune, NC.

[He] has determined their preappointed times.

Acts 17:26b

"Through that verse God was showing me that Steve is not going to leave this earth one second before he's supposed to. Satan can scare us and make us fear death and the unknown, but God is ultimately in control," added Betty.

An Always Faithful Bridegroom

Debbie Reedy is a California-based mother of three whose husband Ralph, a U.S.

Marine counterintelligence officer, is currently on his third deployment to Iraq. She said, "Each time he deploys, God allows me to go through different trials. ... Each has illustrated how God Himself is my bridegroom during Ralph's absence."

Debbie remembers one occasion during her husband's second deployment when their three-year-old son, Andrew, tried to be Superman and jumped off his bunk bed. After a bump "the size of a tennis ball" developed, Debbie and her young son spent 14 hours in a hospital emergency room because the first set of X-rays showed brain contusions.

She recalled, "I was told he would have to be transported to another hospital where a pediatric neurosurgeon could look at him. I prayed earnestly and remembered God's promise in Philippians 4:6-7."

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7

After Andrew was transported to the second hospital for a second set of X-rays, there were no signs of any contusions.

Letting God Do the Talking

One of the tough things a military spouse has to deal with during deployments is talking with their children about their mother or father being gone. However, Debbie Reedy sees this as a great opportunity to share God's Word with young hearts.

"When my kids feel lonely or sad, I take them to portions of Scripture that talk about God's comfort and joy. It helps them experience the reality of God being their heavenly Father [while] their earthly father [is] gone," she explained.

Debbie added that it helps the kids tremendously to regularly pray with them and ask God to bless their father as well as the other soldiers and their families.

Part of a Church Family

"Weekends are always hardest on the family. It is when you really notice Dad's absence because everyone else's dad is home and playing with their kids," explained Betty Wilson.

While the Wilsons were attending Calvary Chapel Okinawa, the church assumed an extremely important role during her husband Steve's deployment. "There were several occasions on the weekends when church members would invite us to go to the beach with them or a park. We were also often invited to dinner," remembered Betty.

"The pastor (Rick Barnett) was super as well," she explained. "He would call and offer to take my son to the park to play with his son. What a blessing to have someone take an interest in you when you feel so alone at those times."

Patience and Fellowship

The Lord's words spoken through Paul are what helped Navy wife Kelly Sears during her husband's seven-month deployment. Currently living at the Naval Air Station in Key West, FL, Kelly relied on the first three words of 1 Corinthians 13:4a (NIV): "Love is patient."



At a Thanksgiving outreach at Camp Pendleton, CA, turkeys and trimmings were provided for military service members and their families by Armor of Light, a military ministry started out of CC Costa Mesa, CA, and headed by Pastor/Chaplain Steve Brown.

“In the military, it’s all about patience,” said Kelly. “When I was sad or missing my husband, I would talk about Christ with one of my best friends, and we would end up having a two-hour conversation on how He works in our lives.”

Having Christian friends to rely on is essential, said Kim Loquist, a Marine Corps wife and mother of three who attends Maranatha Chapel in San Diego, CA. She said her best advice for military spouses is to “find a good Bible-teaching church. Ladies and moms, find a good Bible study and play

group, so you’re surrounding yourself with other Christians.” After 13 years as a Marine Corps wife, Kim knows the importance of having Christ in her relationships: “Your military friends will be there when you need them, but your Christian friends and family will ... also pray for you and with you during difficult times.”

Debbie Reedy added: “I encourage all the other spouses whose husbands are deployed to let Jesus be your all in all. I stand on His promise in Psalm 138:8a: ‘The LORD will perfect that which concerns me.’”

Pastor Steve Brown, overseer of CC Costa Mesa’s Armor of Light ministry to Camp Pendleton, CA, said many military spouses help with outreaches: “We give them a mission: Help us share God’s love with others. ... During deployments, we have seen God draw so many spouses closer to Him through His Word and His people.” ↩

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