

# HAVE YOU EVER SERVED IN THE MILITARY?

*One question can make a big difference.*

## Faith-Based Groups Help a Family When a Member is Deployed

After Steve Robinson completed a 6-year enlistment in the Air Force, his family returned to their home state of New Hampshire, enrolled their kids in school, and joined a local church. Steve continued his military service in the Air National Guard. After a year, Steve left on a 3-month deployment as part of a refueling crew. Shortly after, the family's youngest child became ill and Mrs. Robinson missed work to care for him. The older child missed his father and acted out in school. Home maintenance, bills, and other demands kept piling up, and the family was struggling.



Mrs. Robinson was exhausted, lonely, and depressed. She started withdrawing from the community. It was all she could do to get through the day. The family stopped going to church and did not participate in neighborhood activities. Mrs. Robinson had weathered many deployments when Steve was in the Air Force, but the family had lived on base, where there was a lot of camaraderie and support among families who were in it together. In their new community, many neighbors didn't know Steve served in the Air Guard and that he had just left for a few months. This included their church community. When they first joined the congregation, they never mentioned that Steve served in the Air National Guard, so the leaders and members of the church community

did not immediately notice when the Robinsons stopped appearing at services. Then Mrs. Robinson ran into another member of the church at the supermarket and mentioned that Steve was deployed and things were pretty hectic at home.

The church member let the church leadership know and a group of people from the church came together to support the family. They offered babysitting services, helped with yard work, and offered camaraderie and support to Mrs. Robinson so she didn't feel like she was "going it alone" with her husband away. This made all the difference, bringing the Robinsons back into the fold and surrounding them with people who cared. Based on this experience, the church leadership decided to always ask new members if they serve in the military so they can be clued in to the family's challenges and, as a congregation, provide fellowship and support.

### ASK THE QUESTION:

**"Have you or a family member ever served in the military?"**

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