



The Purpose of the Chaplain

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One of my first tasks as State Chaplain is to clearly define the purpose of the Chaplain - - that is, to spell out clearly why we exist. Unfortunately, not everyone is on the same page when it comes to answering the question, “*Why does your post have a Chaplain?*” Most comrades think we exist to read the prayers at the Post meeting. But is that why we exist? Is that the purpose of the Chaplain?

The Chaplain exists to minister to veterans and their families. And according to our Congressional Charter, the Chaplain “*shall be concerned with the spiritual needs of the members, and by precept and example, point the way toward a high moral plane for the organization.*”

The Chaplain is there to provide:

- 1. SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE:** The Chaplain is available to help individuals and their families with their spiritual needs.
- 2. ASSISTANCE IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS:** In times of crises such as hospitalization, injury, or death, the Chaplain will help and provide assistance to veterans and their families.
- 3. CONDUCTING/ASSISTING AT FUNERALS:** The Chaplain is available to assist families with funeral arrangements, to officiate at the service, or to assist the family minister. Additionally, the Chaplain can help with organizing an honor guard, having a bugler present at the cemetery, and having a presentation of the flag as a token of service and honor on behalf of the local Post and fellow veterans of military service.
- 4. COUNSELING:** The Chaplain is available to provide pastoral care and counsel, and when necessary, to help veterans and their families find appropriate resources for dealing with such issues as post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, or other critical incident stress management problems.
- 5. VISITATION:** Visitation with veterans and their families to provide comfort and encouragement is an important function of the Chaplain.
- 6. ATTENDING FUNCTIONS:** The Chaplain may be called upon to represent the Post at official functions or public meetings, and the Chaplain may be asked to give invocations, dedicatory prayers, or benedictions.

In my role as State Chaplain, I am available to help each of the District and Post Chaplains carry out their responsibilities in ministering to veterans and their families. At the 47th Annual Mid-Winter Conference I will be conducting two different Workshops for Chaplains. On Friday, January 21, 2011, there will be a workshop for District Chaplains, and on Saturday, January 22, 2011, there will be a workshop for Post Chaplains. Make plans now to attend one or both of these workshops.

In the meantime, remember your purpose, because it will determine how you function.

Blessings as you serve.

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