



Sierra Law Enforcement Chaplaincy

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COMMENTS FROM SENIOR CHAPLAIN STEVE WRIGHT

During the last couple of months working with Sierra Law Enforcement Chaplaincy as our Senior Chaplain, I have been answering a lot of questions about what I do. Most people have a vague idea of what a chaplain does, however few know the full breadth of the services we provide. They know we show up in times of crisis, but thanks to Father John Mulcahy of M.A.S.H. fame, chaplaincy has been characterized as merely a prayer, a verse or two, and the last rites. But, in reality, chaplains are best described as emotional and spiritual first-responders. We are trained to arrive on scene, triage the situation, provide emotional and spiritual first aid, and help people who are hurting find the on-going help they may need. Our primary function is to listen, and our most powerful tool is our presence. What we do changes from situation to situation and from moment to moment, and while the “what” of our help is important, it’s the “why” that changes lives.



So why are we in these traumatic situations as chaplains?

1. Because of the family that is now without a mother and full of questions: Who do we need to call? Where will we have the funeral? What do we do now?
2. Because of the officer who is struggling to keep going even one more day: Why do I feel like this? Am I the only one? Will I ever feel normal again?
3. Because of the spouse who spends too much time feeling alone: Will my partner come home? Why won't he/she talk to me? Why does it feel like my spouse is never here?

In the midst of their darkest moments, the Chaplaincy is there with them. There is always help. There is always hope. They are not alone!

Chaplain Steve Wright

COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the Executive Director, every month I plan the training calendar for our chaplains. This past month I recruited Chaplain Michael Garren from the V.A. to provide our training. He gave a very important class on the “Moral Wounds to the Soul” due to trauma. This training is helpful for the officers who are victims of trauma as well as for the citizens we respond to in the community. Some of the major debilitating pain and sorrow people experience are the hidden wounds that don't necessarily send one to the hospital.

I had an opportunity to minister to a brother and sister who were in pain and shock from the sudden and unexpected death of their mother. I was contacted by the Sheriff's dispatcher and asked to go to a death on the Georgetown Divide. When I arrived, I met with a brother and sister who also had just arrived from Lodi. Their mother, who was described as a vibrant healthy woman in her 70's, had not responded to phone calls for days. When the sheriffs did a welfare check, they discovered she had died in her sleep. It was a complete shock because just days before, her son was at the house helping her feed her cattle. I came alongside them, giving them comfort in their grief. I spent a few hours consoling them, and then I guided them through a review of their mother's life and heard many stories of what a wonderful woman she was. The children were going to gather the other family members at their home in Lodi that evening. Please keep this family in your prayers.

This past month I had the pleasure of interviewing two new chaplain recruits: a local pastor and a woman who teaches Bible Study Fellowship in her church. Both underwent rigorous background checks and were cleared to become part of our chaplaincy. Again, I want to thank all of you for your continued support, friendship, and prayers.

Chaplain Tim Thompson

Please pray with me for...

- The family that found their mother had died alone in her bed at her home
- A husband (a former sheriff's employee) and the family whose loved one was murdered
- Our chaplains as they continue to minister to two families that were killed in a head-on collision
- The grieving spouses and family members from those accidents