

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Navy Chaplaincy**  
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1. What is ministry like in the Navy?

*A: Ministry is ministry: You are expected to lead worship, preach, teach Bible Studies, disciple lay leaders. In addition to that, you are expected to work as a team with other Chaplains from various faith backgrounds. The experience of working along side Chaplains from other faiths, and now from other services (Army, Air Force, and Multi-National), we find enriches our own views and allows us to introduce others to who we are as Foursquare.*

2. How often will I deploy?

*A: In the Navy, there is what is called a sea/shore rotation among assignments to various units. Each assignment is called a "Tour" which is short for "Tour of Duty." One tour is a shore tour at a Hospital or Chapel which is usually 3 years. This is followed by an operational tour with a Marine Unit or Ship. While on the operational tour Chaplains may be deploy on ships and Marine Units as outlined below. Although the news focuses on combat units, many ships, units and operations still take place out of harm's way. There are basically two types of operational units which will take units away from their family members:*

- A. On a ship, which usually makes up to 6 month deployments out of a 24 month tour a Chaplain may have. Chaplains usually do not do more than two deployments in 24 months when assigned to a ship.*
- B. With a Marine operational unit, which will usually take you on a deployment for 6 months but not necessarily into combat. Chaplains serve Marine units stationed in Okinawa, Hawaii, and on the east and west coasts. All of them are in a rotation to do combat tours, but they also deploy to other places throughout the Far East in support of multi-national operations. The time away from home (in the field, deploying, or training) is usually about half of the time while assigned to that unit for 30 months.*

3. Do Chaplains carry guns?

*A: Generally, no. Not intentionally. Commanders are usually very careful with where Chaplains go in combat, although the risk is everywhere. Per the Geneva Conventions, Chaplains are not permitted to carry or fire weapons. For the sake of familiarity, Chaplains may train with weapons from time to time, but there is no requirement or expectation to do so. Do not carry a weapon into combat. If a weapon is carried into combat, the Chaplain forfeits his or her right to be protected by those around, and sends the wrong message to other Junior troops.*

4. What shape do I need to be in? Do I need to be "GI Joe?"

*A: Absolutely not. There is no expectation that a Chaplain be the fittest guy or gal in the unit. That being said, the Chaplain is expected to adhere to all height and weight standards, and pass a physical fitness test every six months. Furthermore, the Chaplain is a Naval Officer. As such, the Chaplain is expected to participate in some type of unit physical fitness when those programs are available, and to actively support a "Culture of Fitness" by staying trim and in shape, so you don't start to look "tubby" in your uniform. There is no special graces given to a Chaplain in reference to physical fitness. Much credibility can be gained when you keep yourself in shape, and much credibility can be quickly lost if the opposite is true. Out of respect to you, nothing may ever be said to your face if you get out of shape, but beware the "whispers to your back." Your ministry will be harmed.*

5. What about my family?

*A: The Navy and Marine Corps both emphasize family care for all their forces. The family of a Chaplain can expect to be in regular touch with the spouse of the Commander and also be quickly integrated with the spouses of other officers in the unit. The average age of the military is 19, and the average age of married officers is probably in their late 20's with children. Housing is usually available on most bases, and the unit you are going to be assigned to will assign a sponsor family to help you adjust to the new area. This family, along with web-research and calls to the housing office, can help find housing in areas with good schools.*

6. Do I have to attend a Foursquare Church?

*A: We have Foursquare Churches on the East Coast, West Coast, Hawaii, and Okinawa. I have visited or lived in most places. If you have no regular preaching requirement on Sunday morning I would hope that you would find a local Foursquare Church to help your family, ensure your accountability, fellowship and spiritual growth. However, you may not be close enough to try and Foursquare Church and I encourage you to find a place of worship that would nourish your soul and challenge your spirit in a familiar Assembly of God, Church of God, or Independent church that allows you to move in the Spirit. (Not all Foursquare Churches move in the Spirit, but that is for another discussion).*

7. Why the Navy?

*A: Navy Chaplains have opportunities to be stationed in a wide range of environments all the way up their career ladders - if you stay three years or 30. The Coast Guard, Marines, Navy and Marine Corps Chapels, Navy Ships, Marine and Navy Air Squadrons, the Merchant Marine, Coast Guard and Naval Academies, and special Navy jobs with the Army and Air Force and Post-Graduate opportunities which are fully-funded (they pay your tuition and your full-time salary while you go to school for a year). This may include getting another Master's Degree or a Doctorate, or 4 units of Clinical Pastoral Education.*

8. Why the military?

*A: Chaplains and Chaplains' families live with and serve those in their congregation. We shop at their stores, often live in the same housing, and pastor them all at the same time. In combat or otherwise deployed, Chaplains often sleep, work, eat, and travel incarnationally with those they minister to – sharing in their pain, loss, and joys.*

**For more information about Foursquare Chaplaincy, contact us at [chaplains@foursquare.org](mailto:chaplains@foursquare.org). Comments about this document are also welcome.**