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Marital Intimacy While Deployed



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 **HOMELIFE**
GUIDE

Sexual Needs and Deployment

With Kurt Bruner, The Center for Strong Families

A married couple's need for physical intimacy cannot just be turned off during the many months of a deployment, especially for men. God designed you for a fulfilling sexual relationship with your spouse. You are one flesh and remain a gift to one another even when deployment requires physical separation. While self-gratification (i.e., masturbation) can be problematic outside the marital union and can be used to undermine rather than strengthen the marital bond, many couples find creative strategies to share the experience in order to meet one another's needs while apart. Be sure to do so in a manner that keeps your spouse the sole source of emotional, visual and/or audible stimulation.

STEP 1: Talk

You and your spouse need to discuss what is and what is not okay in the area of sexual release. Wives should try to understand that their husband cannot always control when sexual urges come. God designed men to desire his wife's body and that desire continues and grows when apart. Without his wife's understanding and cooperation a deployed husband will face weakening resistance to the temptation of pornography. The fact is, most men on a several month deployment will end up releasing sexual tension at some point, whether through masturbation or illicit sex. Talking together in advance helps couples move satisfaction of this basic need from an embarrassing secret to a practical reality which can be addressed within the marital union.

Some couples may assume they can try total abstinence while apart. However, such a plan can set up failure. A husband, for example, may agree to try abstinence only to risk guilty secrets because he has left himself vulnerable to the temptation of pornography. Share openly with each other what your concerns might be. The bottom line is that any sexual satisfaction should come only from your spouse. It may take some creativity to come up with a plan you are both comfortable with.

TALK IT OVER QUESTIONS:

1. Do you feel the frequency of sexual intimacy in your marriage is high, average or low?
2. What concerns, if any, do you have about your sexual needs during the upcoming deployment?
3. What concerns, if any, do you have about your spouse's sexual needs during the upcoming deployment?
4. Would you be okay with your spouse masturbating to fulfill a sexual need, using you as his/her stimulus?
5. What types of things would you be willing/not willing to do to help connect with your spouse's sexual needs?

STEP 2: Plan

As you plan together keep privacy a top priority. Then be creative. God made most men to be sexually aroused by sight. As a wife, you can take advantage of this by creating pictures or videos, for your husband's eyes only, before he leaves on deployment. If you feel insecure about your body's appearance remember that your husband loves you and is designed to take pleasure in his wife's body. You are trying to meet his needs and helping him resist the pervasive lure of pornography. The most secure way to keep these images might be to store them on a password protected USB flash drive. This way, even if it gets lost, your privacy is still protected by a password--so make it a good one!

As a husband, understand that God made most women to be sexually stimulated through emotional connection. Come up with creative ways of connecting that can help meet some of her emotional needs. Write often. Handwritten love letters are best, but emails and text messages work when necessary. No need for poetic eloquence. Just receiving a hand-written note from you expressing your love is enough to fill her emotional tank.

Husband and wife might also enjoy a sexually enticing phone conversation that reconnects both to intimate experiences shared when together (i.e. "Close your eyes and imagine that I am [DESCRIBE A PHYSICAL ACT].") Adding a webcam can add a visual element to the experience. Again, be mindful of privacy and security when you consider live encounters!

STEP 3: Pray

Suggested Language: "Father, you have created us man and woman and have brought us together as husband and wife. Please show us how to best honor you in our marriage in the upcoming deployment. Give us guidance and peace to make a plan for the gift of sexual needs and fulfillment you have given us. Amen."

STEP 4: Implement

Use your plan while deployed. Remember, the goal is not to create a dependency or hunger for sexual release, but rather to provide a pre-approved and guilt-free method of satisfying a very real need. Keep it fresh. Continue to come up with new ideas and surprise your spouse with your zeal to meet his or her needs. Never push or manipulate your spouse into accepting something you want to do or want them to do that falls outside of what is morally acceptable or personally comfortable. Doing so will only drive insecurity and possibly resentment in your spouse.

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Book:

God Strong: A Military Wife's Spiritual Survival Guide (Sara Horn) Sara also provides online support for military wives at wivesoffaith.org

Faith Deployed: Daily Encouragement for Military Wives (Jocelyn Green)

The Five Love Languages: Military Edition (Gary Chapman & Jocelyn Green)

Connection Tips: Get ideas for long-distance intimacy and family connection while deployed at hillcrestbc.com/homelife/military

GOING FURTHER – Church Support

Hillcrest has a variety of Sunday School classes and Small Group Bible Studies for the spiritual development of every person. No matter your age and stage of life, there's a class for you. Visit the Welcome Center in the foyer or contact adults@hillcrestbc.com for more information.