

The Covenant and the Code of Ethics for Chaplains of the Armed Forces

The Covenant

Having accepted God's Call to minister to people who serve in the Armed Forces of our country, I covenant to serve God and these people with God's help: to deepen my obedience to the Commandments, to love the Lord our God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. In affirmation of this commitment, I will abide by the Code of Ethics for Chaplains of the Armed Forces and I will faithfully support its purposes and ideals. As further affirmation of my commitment, I covenant with my colleagues in ministry that we will hold one another accountable for fulfillment of all public actions set forth in our Code of Ethics.

The Code of Ethics

I will hold in trust the traditions and practices of my religious body.

I will carefully adhere to whatever direction may be conveyed to me by my endorsing body for maintenance of my endorsement.

I understand as a chaplain in the Armed Forces that I must function in a pluralistic environment with chaplains of other religious bodies to provide for ministry to all military personnel and their families entrusted to my care.

I will seek to provide pastoral care and ministry to persons of religious bodies other than my own within my area of responsibility with the same investment of myself as I give to members of my own religious body. I will work collegially with chaplains of religious bodies other than my own as together we seek to provide as full a ministry as possible to our people. I will respect the beliefs and traditions of my colleagues and those to whom I minister. When conducting services of worship that include persons of other than my religious body I will draw upon those beliefs, principles, and practices that we have in common.

I will, if a supervisory position, respect the practices and beliefs of each chaplain I supervise, and exercise care not to require of them any service or practice that would be in violation of the faith practices of their particular religious body.

I will seek to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues throughout the military environment.

I will maintain a disciplined ministry in such ways as keeping hours of prayer and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, and regularly engaging in educational and recreational activities for professional and personal development. I will seek to maintain good health habits.

I will recognize that my obligation is to provide ministry to all members of the Military Services, their families, and other authorized personnel. When on Active Duty, I will only accept added responsibility in civilian work or ministry if it does not interfere with the overall effectiveness of my primary military ministry.

I will defend my colleagues against unfair discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion or national origin.

I will hold in confidence all privileged and confidential communication.

I will respect all persons of other religious faiths. I will respond to any expressed need for spiritual guidance and pastoral care to those who seek my counsel.

I will show personal love for God in my life and ministry, as I maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of the profession to which I have been called.

I recognize the special power afforded me by my ministerial office. I will never use that power in ways that violate the personhood of another human being, religiously, emotionally or sexually. I will use my pastoral office only for that which is best for the persons under my ministry.

Adopted by the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces
January 2011