

Case Study - Lesson 8: Self Care

Setting: *Two chaplains talking together in one of their offices as they eat lunch.*

Chaplain 1: I just can't believe they are using any kind of reasonable duty roster. How do I end up having on-call chaplain duty again? That makes for the fourth time this year. It's ridiculous.

Chaplain 2: On-call is painful here, too. It's like working two jobs, one during the day and a second at night.

C1: No s**t. And my Commander doesn't want to hear anything about it, either. He just says duty is part of the Army Officer experience. And what really bothers me is that the chaplains up at garrison don't even pull it. As if their work is so stressful and demanding they don't have time for real ministry. I'd like to see their fat asses in our staff PT. They wouldn't last five minutes. That'd show them a little of what stress is about.

C2: Yeah, that would bring back some memories ... I can just hear SGM Jones: "Chaplain, I'm not sure what you call that, but it's not a pushup ..."

C1: It's just ridiculous. The whole Chaplain Corps seems to be oriented to serve the LTCs and COLs, or to make sure they don't have to work too hard—what a crock of s**t. And I think what really bothers me is that the division chaplain won't stand up to them. He could. My friend in the 82d said that at Fort Bragg the division chaplains don't even pull duty. They used to, but the division chaplain told the garrison that the combat chaplains were too busy for that. But our division chaplain is too busy sucking up and positioning himself to get promoted to ever stand up for us. Talk about worthless.

[Knock on the door. C1 goes to the door and opens it a crack.]

C1 *[To a Soldier outside the door]*: Hey, how are you doing? *[Pause while Soldier responds.]* Oh yeah, I'll talk to your 1SGT about that. I just haven't seen him in the last couple days. Sorry about that. Listen, I'm in a meeting right now. I'll make sure I talk with your 1SGT this afternoon. Yeah, we can talk in a couple days, but you're going to have to give me some time to talk with your 1SGT. Be patient!

[Closes door and comes back and sits down.]

C1: Have you ever noticed that we spend about 90 percent of our time comforting the whiners? The strong Soldiers just handle things, don't get into trouble. I love to help those guys. But it seems like it's always the whiners who come to us. And then I go to see the 1SGT, and find out she already took care of it, or did everything possible for some guy, and then I look like a candy a**.

C2: Yeah, well, I've got to get going. We're going out to the shoot-house this afternoon and watching the boys blow some stuff up.

C1: Lucky you. I guess I'm going to talk to this guy's 1SGT to find out there's nothing that can be done, before I head over to the hospital for the night to hold hands and not get any sleep before showing up at the XO's killer PT tomorrow morning. Wonderful.

Case Study Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are some of the danger signs you see in this conversation that tells you that this chaplain might need some help?
- 2) What are some of the issues that this chaplain might be dealing with?
- 3) How might a good friend help?
- 4) What are early signs a supervisor of this chaplain might see that could clue him to the fact that the chaplain needs some help? What are later signs?
- 5) Have you ever felt/acted like this chaplain? What are steps you took to bring your life into balance?