



Multiplying Our Ministry: Developing Chaplaincy Support at Every Level

Rev. Peter R. Hook, VFW National Chaplain 2024-2025

Shortly after I was elected Chaplain of my original Post in Yardley, PA, I began identifying individuals I could call upon to step in for me at events should I become unavailable. That day came sooner than expected.

While out of town, I received a call from a family asking if I could conduct a funeral service for their loved one, a fellow veteran. I let them know I wasn't available but assured them that I could send two capable individuals in my place. The family agreed. I contacted the two, prepared a funeral service, and emailed it to them. They conducted the service together, and the family was deeply appreciative. In fact, one family member said he hoped they would conduct his funeral someday.

Over time, I developed a small team within my Post—six individuals I could rely on to assist with chaplain duties. I never formally called them "Chaplain Assistants," but that's effectively what they were. When I later became State Chaplain, I applied the same model, building a network of chaplains across Pennsylvania I could call on as needs arose.

I encourage you to do the same: seek out and invest in others who can help you carry out your duties, especially at the Post level. In churches, this is called discipleship. In business, it's called mentoring. Whatever term we use, the goal is the same - multiplying our ministry by equipping others.

Here is a simple, three-step model to guide you in developing ministry helpers:

Step One: Modeling - "You Watch Me"

Invite someone to join you as you visit hospitals, conduct funerals, or support veterans in need. Talk with them about what you do and why it matters.

Demonstrate not only the tasks but the character and care that go into the role. Introduce them to the *Chaplain's Handbook* and other helpful resources found on our chaplains' resource site: https://lotcs.org/vfw_chaplain.html.

Step Two: Participating - "We Do This Together"

Gradually involve them in the work by assigning small tasks—perhaps reading a

prayer or offering brief remarks. Be generous with encouragement and praise. As their confidence grows, increase their level of involvement and responsibility.

Step Three: Empowering - "You Do It, and I'll Watch"

When they're ready, let them take the lead while you provide support and feedback. This reinforces their development and gives them real-world experience with a safety net in place.

This intentional approach is a wise investment of time and energy. Not only does it strengthen our ministry, but it also ensures continuity and expands our reach. Start by identifying just one person who shows promise. The seeds you plant today will grow into a legacy of service.

Blessings as you serve,



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