

THEME 6: JOURNEY OF HUMAN AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Relationship to Lived Experience

Reflection

When he returned from his tour in Iraq, the baby was nine months old. He felt like an outsider in his own family. There was no way he could fully explain what his past year had been like, and he had missed so much at home. The baby didn't know him and certainly didn't seem to need anyone but Mom. His wife was thrilled that he was home, but she resented that his return had thrown a wrench into her well-established routine. They felt a great distance between them. Memories of the happy days when they were first married helped to give them faith that God meant for them to be together, and they looked with hope to better days ahead. She found support from other military spouses; he found sound advice in his talks with their pastor. Now, their baby is four years old. Their marriage and their family bond are strong. They volunteer as a mentor couple to support other military couples struggling with similar transitions.

Discussion Questions

1. Make a map of the different "marriages" you have experienced. What events were the transition points that caused each change?
2. How has surviving a time of trial, either personally or in your marriage, better equipped you to support others who are suffering or struggling?
3. How can a church community help families in times of transition and loss, e.g., families experiencing a death or birth, empty-nest couples, parents of teens?

Journaling Questions

1. Write a prayer for your spouse, expressing your hopes and dreams for him or her.
2. Think of a time from the past when your marriage went through a transition. Describe life before, during, and after the transition. What got you through? How was God present to you?