

# RJ & Sabrina Prestwich



## One Year Anniversary

### WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED IN THE LAST YEAR?

RJ spent 15 years in pastoral ministry, but becoming a missionary to the military community was scary. Would we enjoy it? Would we be a good fit? Is this really where God is taking us? Yes, yes, and yes! We LOVE sharing Jesus and our lives with the Soldiers at Joint Base Lewis McChord!

In some ways, it's everything that we expected. It becomes more evident to us every week how much our Soldiers need Christian community and the family that is found in the body of Christ. Just last week RJ received a text message from a Soldier who has been away for a while on a special assignment. He shared with RJ how much he missed being home. The Soldier did not mean his home with his parents and friends where he grew up; he was referring to his Cadence home, his Christian family that God has provided here at our house!



We are building a culture in which Soldiers feel safe to be themselves and open up about sins and temptations in their lives, where we can point them to Scripture for repentance and growth in the Lord. For some of our Soldiers, we are the only Christian family they've ever had. One Soldier told us this past Christmas what a joy it was for him to celebrate Jesus' birth with us because his own family are not believers, so their Christmas traditions are so different from how we celebrated the holiday.

Christian Soldiers are "starving" for a Christian family and community. There are so few committed Christians in the military community and so many ungodly temptations that it's easy for them to feel depressed and alone in the Army. We've also noticed that Soldiers will do anything for that next promotion or status booster and not show any concern for whom they crush in the process. At those times when our Soldiers feel the darkness and emptiness, we can share the light of Christ and point nonbelievers to hope that can be found in Jesus.

### BIBLE FOCUS

RJ has been very intentional this last year to lay the foundation of who Jesus is and what the Bible teaches. With the various backgrounds that our Soldiers come from, it's important to clarify that the Bible is true and authoritative. Last fall RJ taught a series called *Why We Can Trust the Bible*, followed by a gospel series in which he taught what sin is, who God and Jesus are, and what our response should then be. We are now going verse by verse through the Sermon on the Mount.

Some of our richest moments in growing deeper in Jesus with the Soldiers have come from small group studies and retreats. RJ is leading a theology/discipleship study for a few guys who have a desire to go into some sort of ministry once they get out of the Army. He also led a men's purity study, which was so impactful that once it was over one of our Soldiers wanted to do it again. That Soldier is now leading the same study with a different group of guys. I also led a ladies' study on the book of James and we're about to start a study on the book of Romans.

We've taken the soldiers on three long weekend retreats over the last year. It's important for us to create times to get away from distractions, unplug from electronics, and focus on God and one another. During each retreat, RJ has a sermon focus that challenges the Soldiers to grow deeper in their walk with Jesus.

### PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

Have you ever been excited about something, but when that became a reality, it wasn't exactly as you had expected? Well, that's us. I've always supported RJ in ministry and have been a sounding board for ideas, but when we joined Cadence International, we were so excited to become ministry partners. Over the last year, we've encountered certain realities of being coworkers that we hadn't quite anticipated. Not all are bad, they are just different and have required adjusting to. My expectations aren't the same as his, his work habits aren't the same as mine...you get the idea.

All that to say, this last year God has been growing our patience and grace with one another, as well as convicting us that we don't pray as often or about as many things as we should. Our pastor recently did a sermon series on prayer

and one thought that stood out in both of our minds was, “the things we don’t go to God in prayer about are the things that we are telling God we can handle on our own.”

God calls us to have feeble knees from praying. We believe prayer is vital to our Christian walk, yet it’s so easy to let the day go by without having intentional prayer and only calling out to Him when a crisis enters our day. God has been opening our eyes to the ways we try to control too much of our lives. We need to be taking more to the Lord in prayer.

Please pray for us as we build new spiritual habits. We have begun having an afternoon “coffee break” where RJ and I stop office work and homeschooling to come together with an iced coffee treat and have an intentional time to pray together as husband and wife. There have been days where we’ve let the busyness of our schedule take over our prayer time, but we desire for this to become a daily habit—that we would grow in our relationship with Christ, relying on Him and putting Him first in our marriage.

**WHAT’S NEXT?**

The Cadence verse is 1 Thess. 2:8 “Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.” That’s what we aim to do! We don’t measure a successful ministry by the number of people who come to Bible study every week, but rather by life change towards God. Over the last year, we’ve seen Soldiers begin Bible reading plans for the first time, some who’ve begun their battle towards sexual purity and pursuit of a holy life, and others who’ve grown in their understanding of church and have begun taking steps towards church membership. We also have Soldiers who don’t know Jesus but have started to come to Bible study every week to learn more about Him. We praise Jesus for how He’s working!

When we first moved to Washington, seven faithful soldiers were attending Bible study. It was such a sweet intimate group of believers who were hungry for Jesus and Christian community. Over the last year, these soldiers have invited more and more friends to join us and, as of tonight’s Bible study, 37 people RSVP’d to attend.

The larger our group grows, the harder it is to have a deep relationship with every Soldier. As we move into year two of Cadence ministry, we are getting trained in and praying

about creating a JBLM Cadence ministry team to have more trained and effective leaders in the group to help us disciple the Soldiers. We are also praying about how God would have us use our house. As we’ve grown, the living room in which we gather for Bible study has gotten tighter and tighter. We are praying and looking at ways in which we can have a larger meeting space to better fit our growing group.

On a personal note, RJ and I are tired! Life-on-life ministry takes an emotional, mental, and physical toll. Not only do we recognize this, but we’ve also recognized the importance of creating a Sabbath in our life, one day a week where we just let Jesus refresh us and focus on our family. In an effort to unplug, we have been shopping for a tow-behind camper. We feel like this will help us rest, as it’s hard for us to stop working when we live where we work. The hope is that this will allow us to easily drive away, unplug from technology and to-do lists, and help us refresh and connect with one another.


**STAY CONNECTED WITH US!**

We send out emails with ministry and family updates and prayer requests. If you’re on our list and haven’t been receiving those, check your junk mailbox and add RJ.Prestwich@Cadence.org to your contacts list in your email. If that doesn’t work or you want to be added, please let us know so that we can add you to our email list.

Second, we are working on creating a private communication method where we can add more personal and time-sensitive prayer requests, such as who we would like prayer for that week at Bible Study. If you’d like to join our prayer team, please reach out and let us know!

Gratefully,  
**RJ and Sabrina**





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**RJ & Sabrina Prestwich**  
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