



## Twelve Years Serving with Cadence: Lessons from the Journey

*Dear ministry partners,*

It's hard to believe it's been twelve years since we stepped into this ministry with Cadence. As we look back, I'm struck not just by how much God has done, but by how much He's shaped us in the process. This letter isn't a polished report—it's more of a reflection on some of the key lessons we've learned along the way. I hope it encourages you as much as your support and prayers have encouraged us.



Ministry outing

### 1. ENTERING THEIR WORLD

To build trust and strengthen relationships within the military community, we have found it essential to immerse ourselves in their rhythms. This means attending their happenings like promotions, performances, or other formal or informal life events. Programmatic elements include planning resilience outings, camping trips, cookouts, and service projects. These activities aren't just "extra," they help us understand our community's needs, earn trust, and expand our reach. But often the most effective connections come through the ordinary: hiking, traveling, working out, attending our kids' school concerts—simply inviting others into the things we have already enjoyed. These rhythms of life become opportunities for discipleship and care. We don't need to reinvent the wheel—just faithfully use what God has already given us.

### 2. SERVING CHAPLAINS

At the chapel level, we invest in both official and personal ways. Attending staff meetings and aligning with chaplain leadership gives me credibility and voice, even if the meetings aren't exactly riveting. Meanwhile, befriending fellow chaplains and their families—preaching for them, supporting them, encouraging their families—often means more than I realize. A few have even told me I am their only friend in ministry. That still humbles me. Sometimes, my experience as a former chaplain opens doors others can't walk through. But it is trust, not titles, that keep these doors open.

### 3. GROWTH THROUGH HARD THINGS

God has used difficult seasons to do more than grow our ministry—He has grown *us*. Difficult leadership situations, frequent farewells, stretching doctoral journeys, and navigating ministry transitions have taught us perseverance, humility, and the value of a growth mindset.

Completing our doctorates was not about acquiring titles. It forced us to wrestle with our own insecurities, accept critique, and stay the course when we wanted to quit. The research we did gave us practical tools for ministry.

### 4. LEADING BY EQUIPPING

Twelve years in, we've come to believe deeply in *collaborative leadership*. Not the kind that pretends everyone's equal in responsibility, but the kind that listens, equips, and adapts to help others succeed. The best leaders we've served under (and tried to be) make room for others to lead, protect and praise the team, and know when to support or step aside and celebrate. All of this doesn't just make good leadership sense—it's also deeply theological. The Body of Christ is made up of many parts. Rebecca and I don't have all the gifts—we are not supposed to. We have



Cadence Men's Field Retreat



learned to equip others who are better at teaching, evangelizing, or leading in certain areas. This practice increases our trust in God to do His work through His people.

5. LEARNING FROM THE TEAMS WE LEAD

Over the years, we have led volunteer ministry teams and staff teams. Each team member has taught us something unique. Some people have come in spiritually mature; others have just begun their journey, but all have grown. And so have we.

A few key lessons we have learned: set clear expectations from the start, match people to roles based on passion and gifting, and always reinforce the “why” of the ministry. Celebrate growth, even when it looks different from what you expect. And above all—lead people, not programs.



6. PLANNING WITH THE SPIRIT

Strategic planning sounds technical, but for us, it’s been deeply spiritual and practical. We rely on three things: a surrendered spirit, a thoughtful mind, and wise counsel. The Holy Spirit has guided us through decisions big and small—shaping plans, providing clarity, and keeping our hearts aligned with God’s purposes.


We believe the Holy Spirit speaks through community, not just individuals. That’s why our planning has always been collaborative. We have seen how humility, unity, and Spirit-led discernment can lead to plans that serve people and glorify God.

7. LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

Being Hospitality House Directors has grown us more than we could have predicted. It’s not just about opening our home—it’s about personal connection, emotional health, and faithful presence. At The Harbor, we learned to lead through a significant transition. With Team Kadena, we learned the value of mutual support in staff ministry. At the Airmen’s Ministry Center, we sowed slowly but intentionally. And here in K-Town, we’ve leaned on God more than ever as we’ve rebuilt and relaunched from the ground up.

Each place has stretched us. Each assignment, each team, and each struggle has shaped our faith and ministry philosophy. As we reflect on the past and look to the future, we’re grateful and humbled by what God has allowed us to be a part of. We’ve learned that ministry is not just about programs or outcomes but about people, trust, and daily faithfulness. Thank you for walking with us through it all.

Much love and God bless,  
**Deric Sneller (on behalf of the Snellers)**



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**Deric & Rebecca Sneller**

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