http://godcomplexradio.com/2013/04/amy-blumenshine-welcome-them-home-help-them-heal/

Guest:
- An advocate for pastoral care of soldiers returning from war, author Amy Blumenshine recently cowrote Welcome Them Home, Help Them Heal: Pastoral Care and Ministry With Service Members Returning From War.

Suggested learners:
- Adults and mature teens, especially in congregations with returning veterans or in areas with a high concentration of military families

Outline of interview:
- There is great power in recognizing the risks that others have taken; it’s sometimes enough simply to pause in memoriam.
- Veterans face both visible and invisible injuries; we must acknowledge both
  - Anxiety, depression, PTSD, addiction, etc.
  - Combination of physiological and psychological harm is especially dangerous
  - Impairs ability to build relationships, cultivate a spiritual connection with God
- Mortal vs. moral peril?
- Over 2 million have been involved in Iraq or Afghanistan, and nearly half of the returning soldiers have applied for disability compensation (identified themselves as being permanently impaired by an experience in the military)
- Church must see its potential as a resource for those in moral crisis—not to replace the Veterans’ Administration, but rather as a supplement to it
- Spiritual maladies include soul wounds, violated conscience, and deep grief
  - Who am I now, as compared to who I was?
    - That’s where Church steps in—not necessarily who they are, but whose they are
- Being morally opposed to the war—separating the veteran from the war
  - Honoring the veterans’ experiences without making assumptions about the experiences they’ve had
    - “Listen, witness, and weep” as a means of relating to veterans

Additional reflection questions:
1. Think about veterans you know. Do you know what helped or hindered their return?
2. What can we do to honor veterans without assuming we understand their experiences?
Has your community explored such an effort? If so, how?

3. Consider the discussion on moral opposition to the war but acceptance of the veteran. What kind of feelings does this bring up for you? Do personal experiences come to mind?

4. Consider the Five Marks of Mission or other statement of Christian ministry priorities. Where does ministry to veterans fit in, and why? What about the work of the veterans themselves?

Podcast study guides are a new genre for us all. Have a suggestion? Please contact us at cmt@vts.edu.