

## **A WORD FROM THE PASTOR**

This was posted on my e-mail by a retired Navy doctor friend of mine who said, "This has been around before but it can never be said often enough!"

As your Pastor, I thought I should pass it on to you.

PASTOR BOB+

### **A Simple "Thank You"**

Last week, while traveling to Chicago on business, I noticed a Marine sergeant traveling with a folded flag, but did not put two and two together. After we boarded our flight, I turned to the sergeant, who had been invited to sit in First Class (across from me), and I inquired if he was heading home.

"No."

"Heading out?" I said.

"No. I'm escorting a soldier home."

"Going to pick him up?"

"No. He is with me right now. He was killed in Iraq. I'm taking him home to his family."

The realization of what he had been asked to do hit me like a punch to the gut. It was an honor for him. He told me that, although he didn't know the soldier, he had delivered the news of his passing to the soldier's family and felt as if he knew them after many conversations in so few days. I turned back to him, extended my hand, and said, "Thank you. Thank you for doing what you do so my family and I can do what we do."

Upon landing in Chicago the pilot stopped short of the gate and made the following announcement over the intercom.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to note that we have had the honor of having Sergeant Steeley of the United States Marine Corps join us on this flight. He is escorting a fallen comrade back home to his family. I ask that you please remain in your seats when we open the forward door to allow Sergeant Steeley to de-plane and receive his fellow soldier. We will then turn off the seat belt sign."

Without a sound, all went as requested. I noticed the sergeant saluting the casket as it was brought off the plane,

and his action made me realize that I am proud to be an American.

So, here's a public "Thank You" to our military Men and Women for what they do, so we can live the way we do.

Stuart Margel, Washington, D.C.