

## Prayer Therapy in a Case of Acute Myeloid Leukemia: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

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**Abstract :** Cancer, which accounts for 7 percent of deaths per year in Kenya, is the third highest cause of death after infectious and cardiovascular diseases. Awareness Campaigns have tended to focus on leading cancers including breast and cervical for women as well as prostate and Esophageal for men. Consequently, less common cancers such as Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML) are rarely properly understood by the general population and a section of the medical fraternity. Diagnoses of AML in patients who may not have heard about it sometimes results in shock, denial and confusion not just to the diagnosed, but also to their family and friends. The diagnosed and caregivers are bound to receive a lot of contradicting information about prognosis, care and treatment of AML. This information, which often comes from diverse sources including doctors, friends, internet and social media platforms, causes further confusion and panic. The situation is handled differently by different people. Religious people sometimes resort to prayer. This paper, written from the perspective of a care giver, is based on data collected from a case of Acute Myeloid Leukemia diagnosed in a 32 year old male who lost his life within six weeks of diagnosis. The sample constitutes of 16 people who participated in prayers. Out of this total, 5 were males including the diagnosed and 11 were females. All the 16 were Christians of protestant orientation including Anglicans, Quakers and Church of God members. Data was collected by the researcher herself through participant of observation. Findings discuss how the 16 participants prayed individually at different times, together in an overnight prayer meeting and every morning through a group social media platform. They shared songs and words of encouragement from the bible. The group prayed for healing, peace and strength to the diagnosed and family, financial breakthrough and doctors' work and decisions, among other challenges that came with the situation. The paper reveals the immense benefits of prayer to the diagnosed and his close relatives and friends. They include acceptance of the condition and a positive attitude in handling the challenges that arose from the disease and treatment processes. The challenges arising from the prayer approach of handling the situation are also discussed. The paper concludes that prayer as therapy goes a long way in cancer management.

**Keywords :** acute myeloid leukemia, Kenya, participant observation, prayer

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