

# THE POWER OF PRAYER

## Facing cancer with God by her side

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### Self care articles for the bereaved

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International Grief Institute

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Stacy Roorda, a busy 37-year-old mother of two young girls, had noticed a lump in her left armpit for some months. Having moved into a larger home the previous winter, she had attributed the pestering symptom to the strain of moving.

Nine months later, in November 2006, Stacy finally went to see her naturopath. Suspicious of something sinister, the doctor immediately sent Stacy for a battery of tests. The results rocked her world.

Stacy had cancer in her left breast—stage 4, with metastases to the bone.

With two little girls at home, surgery was immediately scheduled to remove the primary mass in Stacy's breast.

Then the other shoe dropped.

Pre-op labs revealed Stacy was unexpectedly expecting—and the cancer was feeding on the very hormones her unborn baby needed to survive.

**It was gloom and doom. Tears were shed, prayers were said, and she handed it over to God.**

"I immediately got an image of a harness that racecar drivers wear. The feeling was instant. 'Sit down and buckle up. It's going to be a rough road, but you'll be fine.' I grabbed onto that thought and never let go," shares Stacy.

Finding her case beyond his scope, the local oncologist sent Stacy and her husband south to Seattle.

Because the pregnancy hormone was the cancer's food source, the team of specialists offered few options. Stacy's best chance for survival depended on immediate termination of the pregnancy followed by aggressive treatment. They had no time to waste. The doctors told her it was her only hope. The cancer was too advanced.

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**It was either Stacy's life,  
or the baby. Doctors  
couldn't save both.**

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Against medical advice and to the horror of her loved ones, Stacy refused to abort the baby. The doctors gave her three years to live at best.

News of Stacy's plight spread rapidly in her small hometown of Lynden, Washington.

With a 2-year-old and 4-year-old at home, and the very lives of Stacy and her unborn child at stake, family and friends sprang into action.

Meals were brought, childcare was juggled, and a church prayer chain was started.

Stacy was known for her devout faith. And her stubbornness. Despite pressure from the best oncologists in the state, she refused to terminate the unexpected pregnancy.

An older, less effective chemotherapy that was deemed safer for the developing baby was planned. Nicknamed Red Death, the goal was to slow down the cancer and buy Stacy some time until the baby could be born. Treatment began immediately.

Back at home, news of the family's troubles spread. So did the prayer chain.

Though bolstered by the many petitions, Stacy wasn't about to be left out of the prayer party held on her behalf.

"Before every round of chemo, I would go into the bathroom by myself. I would take a few moments to look directly at Jesus. You can always look around in the world and listen to the negative stuff, but if you look up to Jesus, that is where you find peace that surpasses all understanding. And I prayed that Jesus would fill the room with angels. I felt that as long as Jesus was there with me, I could do it," she said.

But after five rounds of Red Death, the baby started showing signs of distress. They had to stop.

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**Then, things went from  
bad to worse.**

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An MRI showed the cancer had advanced to Stacy's spine, and was marching downward. At 32 weeks gestation, they needed to deliver the baby before the cancer reached the womb.

"Once again I was totally shocked. I thought back to the image of the seat belt. I had a very serious conversation with God.

**"I don't remember signing up for this part. I've done everything you asked, and I've trusted you. You brought us through and we've been lifted up in prayer by loved ones and complete strangers around the world. How could this be?"**

"Once again, I got the feeling God was indeed there and would bring me through it. He gave me a peace that surpassed all understanding, all I had to do was keep praying," she said.

By this time, reports of Stacy's dire situation had spread far and wide.

"I heard that my story reached missionaries, and that people all around the world were praying. That was the most humbling part, is that people were praying for me who had never met me. That is what carried Matt and I through the whole thing," she said.

With news that such a premature delivery was imminent, the prayers that surrounded Stacy and her family took on a new urgency.

**Less than 48 hours later, Jazmine Stacy Roorda was born.**

Weighing just 3.5 pounds and lacking the sucking reflex that hadn't yet developed, their new daughter was otherwise perfect.



The announcement of the baby's birth spread along the prayer chain, but the petitions on their behalf didn't stop.

With the pregnancy behind her, two young daughters at home, a preemie in the NICU, Stacy now faced the cancer treatment head on.

The intensity of the prayer chain that now stretched around the world fortified Stacy's determination. She believed without a doubt that the positive, loving energy contained in a prayer chain is a force that cannot be denied.

What happened next is what some might call a miracle: the treatment designed to buy Stacy a bit more time with her family instead, and inexplicably, brought the cancer to a standstill. It hasn't budged since.

Fast forward thirteen years. Against the odds, Stacy not only survived the doctors' prognosis, so did her baby.

With bone mets, Stacy will never be free from cancer. But for reasons doctors can't explain, it fossilized in the various parts of her body.



**Stacy gives much of the credit to the prayers that came from strangers across the globe.**

What is prayer? It's love in an energetic form. Many use it to talk to God. Others use it to spread light in the world.

No matter how you use or label it, prayer is a powerful energy, love in its purest form.

"The power of prayer is how God works in this world, through people and their petition. Their desire to pray for a complete stranger is out of their love for Jesus. Love trumps everything," Stacy says.

Stacy Roorda is aware that skeptics are still waiting for proof in the power of prayer. But it doesn't faze her.

The prayer party that spanned the world on her behalf is all the proof she needs.



STACY ROORDA WITH DAUGHTERS HANNAH, ZOE AND JAZMINE (2019)