

Bruce & Wendy Dower

FALL 2021



Wendy with our friends, Leny & Jeff Rolle

Dear Friends and Family,

The doctor's words just hung in the air. "Your husband is moving in the wrong direction. He's getting worse. I can't tell you in good conscience he's going to be okay." Where do I go from there? I came out of the bedroom and sat with my friends, whose home we were staying in, and said, "Will you pray with me?" and began to cry.

Bruce and I began a two-and-a-half-month trip to visit with supporters and churches at the end of June. We were halfway through when we both came down with COVID-19. I recovered, and Bruce went to the hospital on August 14. It was five days of wondering if he would make it. Ten days later he came home very weak and on oxygen, but he was home. We didn't know how long the recovery process would be. It's been about five weeks, and Bruce is doing much better and is now only using oxygen at night. As I write, we plan to begin heading home on September 26.



Leaving the hospital

I cannot begin to describe to you how we felt as we experienced the outpouring of love and prayers from so many of you. Truly, there were so many praying on Bruce's behalf. Many of you offered to come out to be with us, offered to come out to drive our vehicle back from California to North Carolina, offered your home for recovery, offered your finances, and offered up prayers around the clock for Bruce. Our Cadence family was praying, our hospitality house family was praying, our churches were praying, our own families were praying, and their friends were praying. We also owe a debt of gratitude to our friends, Jeff and Leny Rolle, with whom we stayed for the entire ordeal. Their hospitality, kindness, generosity,

care, and love were incredible tangible examples of the hands and feet of Jesus. What was supposed to be a couple of weeks ended up being two months. The outpouring of love from everyone was overwhelming and VERY humbling. "Thank you" just doesn't say enough.

People have asked us about this experience. We have two stories, depending on which of us you ask. For me, it was difficult not being able to be with Bruce during that time, and now in hindsight, I see God's hand in that as well. It was so helpful knowing people were praying for me in the waiting. There were many Scriptures the Lord used to comfort me: Psalm 46:1, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble"; Isaiah 41:10, "So do not fear, for I am with you, do not be dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." There were so many more I drew comfort from. Although I didn't know what the outcome of this would be, I knew with every ounce of my being that God would not leave me alone. I felt His presence even in my fear. There are so many verses about not being afraid, and yet in Psalm 56 I read that David said, "When I am afraid, I will trust in You." Sometimes I was still afraid, but He proved over and over to be my refuge and shelter. God is so good.

Bruce has his own story, though, and perhaps he will share that at some point. But he has often said, "God met me in the hospital in new and profound ways and has continued to since, and I wouldn't trade a day of it." God is so good.

I realize as I write this letter that many people I know have not experienced the same outcome. I have sent numerous sympathy cards in these last few weeks to friends who have lost a loved one. My heart aches for you in your grief and I have continued to pray for you. I do not understand all the ways of God but one thing I know is that we never walk alone. I thank Him for that truth.

God is so good.

With deep gratitude and a full heart,

Wendy

Wendy, for Bruce too

WHAT'S NEXT FOR OUR HOME ASSIGNMENT?

At this point, our fall travel plans have been canceled and we will stay home while Bruce continues to recover. We're hoping to see many of you in the spring and early summer, Lord willing, but we will take this one step at a time. We will keep you posted.