

I was sick and you visited me (Matthew 25:31-46)

Each year, about 1.9 million new cases of cancer are diagnosed in the US.

by [Dorothy Sanders Wells](#)

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[The diagnoses were completely unexpected](#). Cori Salazar, age 38, had noticed a large growth on her neck one day. Physicians suggested a biopsy, and Cori, a mother of three young daughters, was diagnosed with an aggressive thyroid cancer. Surgery was scheduled shortly thereafter.

As Cori recovered from her surgery, her husband, Zak, also 38, visited his ophthalmologist to update the prescription for his eyeglasses. The ophthalmologist's finding of swollen optic nerves prompted an emergency MRI—and a diagnosis of a cancerous mass in the frontal lobe of his brain. While there are treatment options, the prognosis was not good: 12 to 18 months.

Their family has not been left to face this arduous journey alone. Friends encircled the couple as they began treatment for their separate cancer diagnoses. While Cori and Zach recovered from surgeries and prepared for treatment, friends planned getaway days. The welcome home from hospital stays included flowers, notes, gifts, and photographs. Over \$200,000 has been raised to provide the family with needed financial support.

Each year, about 1.9 million new cases of cancer are diagnosed in the US—roughly 5,200 cases per day. The encouraging news from the American Cancer Society is that the rate of survival is increasing: ACS reports a 32 percent decline in cancer deaths between 1991 and 2019.

Behind any diagnosis of debilitating illness are humans—our family, our friends—whose well-being depends on our willingness to share the journey. Sending cards or notes, sharing gift cards for the many unexpected expenses, asking specifically how loved ones need help, and remaining present help loved ones know that they are not alone.

As difficult as it is to see loved ones undergoing challenging health crises, it is much more frightening for our loved ones to face those crises feeling that everyone has withdrawn. We see the image of the Creator even in the sick, as we are reminded that there, with the least of these, is Christ.