

**Danville News Column**  
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**“Coping With Cancer”**  
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Been doing a lot of professional praying. Not seeing many friends with cancer getting cured.

Here’s a church secret: never have seen a prayer yet change nature. Have seen it change us. Prayer changes the pray-er, aligning us along the divine. Prayer is best appreciated as transformative than transactional. There’s the healing.

Darn. I’d rather God were a vending machine. Pop in prayer. Pull knob. Claim prize.

Let us hear how our neighbors answered how they cope with cancer.

**What are some practices that help you through your cancer?**

Habit of quiet time spent in relationship with God, although during the pain I had to rely on the prayers of others to sustain me. It’s like filling a well. We read our Bible, accept the fact that not all the days will be good days, and try to come to terms with that thought. You become very intimate with the nurses and Docs. Strength of others. Without others, can’t go through it. Don’t isolate yourself. Subject is not taboo. Talk about it.

**What are the biggest helps?**

The biggest helps were the smallest ones: hospital visits, food, cards. Any kind of acknowledgement that someone understood, (or perhaps didn’t but wanted to help). Don’t phony it. You don’t know how strong you are until you have no other options but to be strong. A friend brought me a stuffed dog and washed my hair. The dog felt good hugged to my chest and affected arm. Tried to keep things as normal as I could – cook meals, clean house, go out for dinner, tried to dance. Someone here for me. Didn’t feel secure being home alone. My oncologist told me to keep walking – it helps the moods and ward off depression. A great spouse and good friends who let you know they care. Laugh a lot. Fight it with all I have. Really tried hard to keep smiling and reach out to others who looked down. Pray. The Lord doesn’t take sides. But what kind of prayer? Pray for strength and for the people who are helping, for those who treat you. Praying for you can be selfish.

**What are some mistakes people make?**

Staying too long when visiting or helping. Not coming around, not getting in touch. Would have liked visits. Not many did. People tend to shy away. The mistakes: over-reassurance. I think that I could have done without the initial optimism. Mistake: all the focus on the sick person forgetting the care-giver.

**What lessons have you learnt from your cancer?**

A lot of people don't know how to react. They don't know how to cope with tears. Need reassurances. Can get nutsy over it, panic attacks. Don't give up but be realistic. Don't take everything the Doc says at face value. Question a lot of things. Can get overload of information and you can range from being an ostrich versus obsession. When they insert the urinary catheter, just expect someone different each time. Some Docs can explain, some can't. Can't be worried about hurting the Doctors feelings – he never gave us a straight answer. We were worried about alienating him. Know the difference between remission and cure. Keep working if you can – takes your mind off it. Live well in relationship with God and others, appreciate each day, and nurture an attitude of gratefulness. Networking. Networking. Networking. Don't wait till hospice. Build up your resources. Be active in the community. Reach out to others. Can't go into a shell. Don't turn people away.

**What suggestions do you have to those who will get cancer?**

Many will support you – you are not alone. Be available for others – such as being on the list for newly diagnosed patients to call. Be open with people and they'll be open with you. Enjoy yourself because you don't know for how long. This is my celebration of life.

**What does the patient need to know about what the care-giver is going through?**

My care givers were all family. They were there. That's all that counts. I'm not sure I wanted to know what my care givers were going through. I had enough to handle. Caregiver needs help, support, respect. Very stressful for her. Help in knowing what the care-giver is going through. Like the person with cancer, the caregiver is going through a mixture of emotions – grief, hurt, impatience, love, and helplessness.

1,500 Americans die from cancer every day. 1 in 2 men face a lifetime risk of developing cancer. Women? 1 in 3. That's a whole lot of us.