



KRB Update #2233 – My Dad

Keith R. Brinkman with Mercy Ships

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I wish to dedicate this KRB Update to my Dad, Robert Lee Brinkman. In the summer, Dad had issues with his health, in and out of the hospital, confused, many tests performed to find out what was going on. He and I agreed in May that I would come back to Indiana in August to be part of the wedding celebration of Dustin and Victoria. However, with his health, the purpose of the visit changed to both for the wedding and caring for him. As we were still waiting for answers to his diagnosis, I returned to the *Africa Mercy* and my responsibilities here. It was not long that the surgeon asked for a family meeting and I listened in to the conversations by phone. Due to the diagnosis of brain cancer and only having a month to two maximum to live, his recommendation was to take him home, care for him there, and die in peace. Though to follow this advice, one of us needed to be in Dad's home, so I made arrangements to travel back and stay at Dad's and do some of my Mercy Ships work remotely over the internet – a decision I will never regret. Though prior to moving him home, we



moved him to the same nursing home where Mom is cared for – so you see in the photo of me visiting with them together. I did not care for him alone, as family and friends came daily and were so generous. Hospice nurse and aides conducted home visits to assist in his medical care and general hygiene. As the days went on, we talked about celebrating Thanksgiving in his home early. After the suggestion from Jay to move the date forward, we did our “Brinkman Early Thanksgiving” on Sunday October 28th. I had the thought of surrounding Dad in his bedroom and sharing stories and memories while he was with us. Some stories we knew of and others were new to some of us. I know he was awake as he tilted his head and opened his mouth indicating he wanted some more food – so I fed him pie and cobbler.

You can see the photo of us surrounding him on this special day, as we were all together. Occasionally I would be able to leave the house if someone came to stay with Dad. On Saturday the third of November, I left in the evening to go to town and to see Mom as Mark came to sit with Dad after work. Then I got the call that Dad had stopped breathing and passed from this earth to heaven above. As I was driving back from Indy, I heard this song on the radio – you can click the [Link](#) for the video of “Well Done” by The Afters. I felt it was aired at that time was for me. Here are some of the lyrics: *What would it be like? When my pain is gone / And all the worries of this world just fade away / What will it be like? When You call my name In that moment when I see You face to face / Waiting my whole life to hear You say / Well Done, well done. / My good and faithful one / Welcome to the place where you belong / Well done, well done / My beloved child / You have run the race and now you're home / Welcome to the place where you belong / What will it be like?*

The next morning at my Dad and brother's church, the pastor came by our row and whispered in my ear ‘*can you imagine what your Dad is seeing today?*’. As he already made his wishes known and arranged at the mortuary, it was simpler for us as family to organize the Tribute - Memorial Service for him. If you wish to read the obituary we wrote for Dad, click [here](#). I shared the eulogy with some of my childhood memories, Jay and Mark spoke along with all four of the grandchildren in order of their birth. We celebrated Dad and the years we had together with him. It has been difficult emotionally, even to write this update – I did share on Facebook and in the Prayer Room for Mercy Ships staff/crew, though I know that did not reach everyone. I call out for God's continual comfort, peace and grace. After cleaning, packing, organizing what I could at his house, and making arrangements for Mom which were greater challenges than I anticipated, I then flew back to Guinea and my life and the community on the ship.

On behalf of the Brinkman family, we are so grateful for the love, prayers, meals, hugs, words, and support for us.

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