

Linda Roorda

Until October 2008, my husband had been very healthy. But he woke up one morning screaming from intense pain everywhere in his body, especially his shoulders. It was the beginning of a cascade of events, and the loss of life as a couple we'd taken for granted. In struggling to get up from a reclining or sitting position, he required surgery to repair tears in both knees, repair a frozen shoulder, and fuse cervical disks. Two weeks after the fusion, he developed unrelenting dizziness not helped by medication or brain surgeries for presumed hydrocephalus. He had a third ventriculostomy. When that was not helpful, a ventriculoperitoneal (VP) shunt was placed with subsequent surgery to shorten the shunt. We have since been told by other specialists that none of these surgeries were necessary; essentially he's had functional hydrocephalus since his premature birth.

However, a week after the shunt placement, Ed developed severe grand mal seizures. He says, "It felt like electric shocks shooting through my body, starting in my head and going out my hands and feet, kinda like holding onto an electric fence and not letting go. It was horrible!" I left for work by 3 a.m. and he believes the seizures began soon afterward, lasting for several hours. At one point, he recalls standing up but then finding himself on the floor, thrashing, with furniture rearranged, bleeding from a gash on his head.

Eventually lucid enough to recall only my work number, an ambulance was summoned. In the ER, staff had difficulty controlling his seizures. We also learned he'd fractured his back by falling onto the basement concrete floor; thankfully it did not damage the spinal cord. The several days of an extended postictal period are totally erased from Ed's memory... except when one of his nurses, the daughter of our friends, told him who she was. The hospital chaplain visited and gradually got me to share our story and the many difficulties our family has faced as he prayed with me.

Visiting the ER months later for an upper respiratory infection, Ed had the same doctor. She was so glad to see him, pleased with how well he had recovered from the seizures; she had feared brain injury from the intensity and difficulty in controlling them.

Along with blindness, Ed struggles daily with chronic/constant muscle pain and weakness, an odd dizziness which doctors have thus far not been able to diagnose or treat with medications, seizures now controlled with medication, an inner body trembling, and worsening undiagnosed and uncontrollable body shaking paroxysms.

Through it all, I am amazed at the strength of his faith. Even on days when we both struggle with the changes that have come our way, his faith remains strong in the Lord. Ed has never been angry or bitter at God for what has happened to him, though understandably very discouraged at times. But, his gentle spirit, godly wisdom, and loving kindness are examples to me and others of Christ's love. It has also been very helpful to have friends who empathize with what we're going through, and come alongside us with their loving support.