

It rained last Thursday, and on the two hour drive to Bristol, the faster we drove, the harder it rained. We had never seen our cousin sick and the first time we did, it was like we were transported into a medical drama on TV only this time, the walls were real; the tubes going into his body carried real medicine; the fear and concern in the doctor's eyes were real and every beep the machines round his bed made gave us an uneasy feeling. The prognosis laid out was bad, his chances were slim... we got on our knees as a family and as a people; in that hospital and all over the world, we prayed as a family and as a people; in that hospital and all over the world.

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Dauda's a peculiar person; he's a man of few words but whatever he said actually mattered and was always said in good faith. The closer we became, the more I realised how deep he was. For in his quiet and reserved person, there laid a man who was both decisive and assured, one who was comfortable in his own skin and strived to be a better person. His most remarkable quality was his integrity; for he was a person who was honest without having to give reason, and who saw it as a state of being not a luxury personality trait.

Dauda was my 'cool' older brother, who had the sleek fashion sense and amazing aura. We all know of his sporting achievements, I never went to Adesoye College but '*Dauvation*' was known even in rival schools; and his remarkable personality still flourished at home. Ever ready to try our new things, whether it was trying out a new recipe- oh yes, he knew his way around the kitchen, playing the guitar (even though it ended up on ebay) or even rugby, he always found a way to keep himself busy and explore the world around him.

We often joked about us growing up and the constant demand our parents placed on us to be 'responsible' and he'd say they should leave him let him enjoy his youth. But he was responsible; every time I'd call him he'd either be in the library or at work and as we know in life we do need to have a balance and as hard as Dauda worked, it's great that he was always able to party hard as well. For those of us that weren't there, we saw the pictures and videos of his dancing skills at Ibrahim's wedding.

Three months ago, we all came together to rejoice with the Fearon family as their first son took a wife, a good thing. Today we all come together to mourn with the Fearon family as their second son has gone to be with his maker. Together, we rejoiced with them and together we mourn with them but we still rejoice in the privilege of meeting Dauda, of knowing Dauda and of fellowshiping with Dauda. We weep because of a mother who loves and lives for her children, a father who cares for and encourages his children and a brother and sister who loved their brother. But the Lord who breathed life into Dauda, who formed Dauda with his own hands and who loved Dauda just as much as He loves us knows best.

It rained last Thursday and I like to believe that was God crying with us, for as we prayed we cried out. And on Friday just before Dauda left our world, the sun shone; that I believe was God telling us that He has accepted Dauda into His rest. Dauda laid up his treasures in heaven, with every elderly and ailing patient he helped at the nursing home, every student he encouraged either by being head boy or a sports maestro, in every job he took, constantly trying to relieve the financial pressure off his parents and in every one of us here that have come to honour his transition into glory. Our comfort lies in knowing that Dauda is seated by the Lord's side and is still a blessing to us in a silent way, same as when he was here. It is that same comfort that has enveloped our family, that same comfort that lies in the hymns we sing, the prayers we say and the kind words we've received. And that same comfort that will take us through this great sorrow and perfect our healing, giving us new found purpose and appreciation of this fragile life.

In April, we lost a young member of our family, one who was also called Dauda, who was also full of determination and promise and one who also loved God. We will not question the Almighty because we have faith in His love and the promises he has for us. And as we give thanks to the Lord for the life of Dauda, we pray that henceforth the tears our parents shed for us shall be tears of joy and not of sorrow, of gratitude for the men and women their children have become and of laughter, holding their grandchildren in their arms. We pray for long life and purposeful lives, but above all we pray that we finish strong, accepting a prize when we meet our maker.

At this time, we say thank you God, for the opportunity of knowing Dauda, for the life he lived, being an obedient son, a loving brother and a loyal friend; we thank God for His sweet Holy Spirit who is comforting us family and friends through this difficult time.

Dauda Idowu-Fearon was one of a kind and is irreplaceable. He is in a better place.

Glory be to God and God bless you all for the love & support you have poured out to the family.