

Sudden loss of a bellwether friend

Murtala Bandiya

I used to think the word "family" referred to people one was related to by blood. However, I realized I was wrong when I came across a friend who understood me more than any other person in this world. He made me believe that family is a word that connotes feelings, mutual understanding, trust and loyalty.

Some people call him Abdullahi, Abdul, Abdulaziz, Audu, My Guy, Aboki, but most people call him Abdullah. I called him different names depending on the circumstances but my favorite is "Doc" because I always wanted him to be a medical doctor. Somehow, he found his way to becoming a geologist.

He was young, brilliant and very talented, full of hope, an academician, a geologist and a researcher. He was always busy trying to solve other people's problems, sometimes ignoring his own. He was a person you could rely on. He is a person I knew for almost 30 years. A friend to all. Always dedicated to whatever task was assigned to him. He was always smiling, never one to lose his temper. He was a complete gentleman. We always thought we would grow old together, as lifelong friends. Alas, it wasn't meant to be.

On Wednesday October 14, 2020 at about 2am, I received a call from a friend that a police officer had called him and told him about a robbery incident at Life Camp, Abuja, close to Paradise Estate and found his complimentary card in one of the vehicles. I asked him to please send the police officer's number

to me. I called the police officer and asked him all the silly questions in the world all in a bid to assure myself that it wasn't Abdullahi. Unfortunately, his answer was "yes".

I tried to calm myself despite the storm that was raging in my head. What had happened was that two vehicles were involved. The occupant of the first vehicle was shot in the chest and had been rushed to the hospital. The occupant of the second vehicle, who happened to be my friend, was shot in the head and died instantly. The rest of what was said afterwards, I cannot recall. My mind went blank.

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exactly we met. The only thing I was able to recall was the first time I saw him cry. That was over 25 years ago when we were in secondary school. I had returned to the hostel during break when I saw him seated beside his locker crying. I almost started crying too because I thought whatever would make him to go back to hostel just to cry must be something very serious.

I asked him what the problem was. He was very hungry and had saved and prepared his last cup of cabin biscuit, milk and sugar. He had been looking forward to having it for lunch only to return and discover that his locker had been burgled. Fortunately, I had a few packs of noodles which we soaked them in water and had lunch. As we ate, I told him one day we would remember and share this story. We laughed over it.

He later on became a lecturer. As a lecturer, he stood out from the rest. He would call his students that failed his test one after the other to ask them what the problem was and how he could help. He was the sort of person who would remove his sim card from his phone and hand the phone to someone that needed it more than him. He would travel all the way from Birnin Kebbi to Port Harcourt just to visit a friend.

Abdullahi Abubakar Sadiq was indeed a friend to all. You will forever be remembered, your thoughts will always be in our minds, your generosity will forever be missed and we will continue to mourn you until we join you. May God grant you the highest place in paradise.

He was survived by his wife and a child.

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