I went to ‘Ā’ishah and asked her to describe to me the Messenger's illness. ‘Ā’ishah said: Yes. The Prophet became seriously ill and asked whether the people had prayed. We replied: No, O Messenger of Allah! They are waiting for you

‘Ubaydullāh ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Utbah reported: I went to ‘Ā’ishah and asked her to describe to me the Messenger's illness. ‘Ā’ishah said: "Yes. The Prophet became seriously ill and asked whether the people had prayed. We replied: 'No, O Messenger of Allah! They are waiting for you.' He added: 'Put water for me in a trough.'" ‘Ā’ishah added: "We did so. He took a bath and tried to get up but fainted. When he recovered, he again asked whether the people had prayed. We said: 'No, they are waiting for you, O Messenger of Allah!' He again said: 'Put water in a trough for me.' He sat down and took a bath and tried to get up but fainted again. Then he recovered and said: 'Have the people prayed?' We replied: 'No, they are waiting for you, O Messenger of Allah!' He said: 'Put water for me in the trough.' Then he sat down and washed himself and tried to get up but he fainted. When he recovered, he asked: 'Have the people prayed?' We said: 'No, they are waiting for you, O Messenger of Allah! The people were in the mosque waiting for the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) for the ‘Ishā' prayer. The Prophet sent for Abu Bakr to lead the people in the prayer. The Prophet's messenger went to Abu Bakr and said: 'The Messenger orders you to lead the people in the prayer.' Abu Bakr was a softhearted man, so he asked ‘Umar to lead the prayer but ‘Umar replied: 'You are more rightful.' So Abu Bakr led the prayer in those days. When the Prophet felt a bit better, he came out for the Zhuhr prayer with the help of two persons one of whom was Al-‘Abbās, while Abu Bakr was leading the people in the prayer. When Abu Bakr saw him, he wanted to retreat but the Prophet beckoned him not to do so and asked them to make him sit beside Abu Bakr and they did so. Abu Bakr was following the Prophet (in the prayer) and the people were following Abu Bakr. The Prophet (prayed) sitting." ‘Ubaydullāh added: "I went to ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and said: 'Shall I tell you what ‘Ā’ishah has told me about the fatal illness of the Prophet?' Ibn ‘Abbās said: 'Go ahead.' I told him her narration and he did not deny anything of it but asked whether ‘Ā’ishah told me the name of the second person (who helped the Prophet along with Al-‘Abbās. I said. 'No.' He said: 'He was ‘Ali (ibn Abi Tālib).'"

[Authentic hadith] [Narrated by Bukhari]

This noble Hadīth illustrates some of what happened during the Prophet's last illness. It

specifically relates that when the Prophet became so ill, he asked those around him as to whether the people had prayed, and the reply came in the negative, and so he asked for a vessel, made ablution, yet fainted. When he regained his consciousness, he asked again and made ablution, yet fainted once more. This occurred for three times, after which he ordered that Abu Bakr lead the people in prayer. When he received the Prophet's messenger with this order, Abu Bakr asked ‘Umar to lead the people in prayer, but he refused and made Abu Bakr come forward, for he was more worthy of that. Then, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) felt better, and so he came out being supported by Al-‘Abbās and ‘Ali. In the meantime, Abu Bakr was leading the people in Zhuhr prayer. When he saw the Prophet, he wanted to step back, but the Prophet pointed to him to remain in his place and he sat next to him. Thus, Abu Bakr was following the Prophet in the prayer, and the people were following Abu Bakr.

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