

Footwashing, humility and grace

Please remove your shoes and socks and sit bare footed.

We would encourage you to participate but please do not feel under any pressure!

Readings: A member of the group read *Philippians 2:5-11*

Prayer - following the reading, please sit in prayer for a short time.

Reading: A member of the group reads this out:

'Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.' (John 13:14)

It is a means of grace when we wash another's feet, for in our washing of our fellow disciples' feet we learn what it means for us to serve as Jesus served, to give of ourselves in order to provide cleansing for our sisters and brothers in Christ. When we wash another's feet, we experience just a little bit of the self-giving love that Jesus had in great abundance for everyone, and it is this love that we are called to express to others by washing their feet.

It is also a means of grace when we receive the washing; for through it we experience anew the humbling reality that Jesus, who didn't have to kneel and serve, who didn't have to give himself to cleanse us of our sins, nevertheless did. He gave himself up in our place, as an eternal act of self-giving service, so that we might be washed clean and made whole. When our brother or sister kneels before us in humble service, washing our feet, we experience the grace of discovery, the grace of realization, that God loves us *even despite our stinky feet*. Jesus expresses this love to us, even though we do not deserve it, and so we are called to express this love to others.

(taken from 'Footwashing as a means of Grace' by Gregory S. Neal)

Feet washing: one person begins by washing the feet of the person to their left and so on round the group.

If you do not want your feet washed feel free to offer your hands for washing or, if you prefer, just remain in prayer and reflection.

Close with this prayer: imitating Christ's humility:
(adapted from Philippians 2:1-4)

Lord Jesus,

We are united with you; we draw comfort from your love; we share fellowship in your Spirit.

Help us to be unified as your people, to be like-minded, to share the same love, to be one in spirit and purpose.

Help us to do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than ourselves. Help us to look not only to our own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Lord, help us to live and grow to be more like you.

Amen