

SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

PERFORMING A FOOT WASHING CEREMONY

Scripture to Look At - John 13:1-17

Background - In John 13, Jesus makes it quite clear to His disciples that His position as the Father's Son includes being a servant rather than being one of power and glory only. To properly understand the scene and the intention of Jesus, we must realize that the washing of feet was the duty of slaves and indeed of non-Jewish rather than Jewish slaves. Jesus placed Himself in the position of a servant. He displayed to the disciples self-sacrifice and love ("...*that you also should do what I have done to you.*" John 13:15). In view of His majesty, only the symbolic position of a slave was adequate to open their eyes and keep them from lofty illusions with respect to the Position. The point of foot washing, then, is to correct the attitude which Jesus discerned in the disciples. It constitutes the permanent basis for mutual service, service in your group and for the community around you, which is laid on all Christians.

How to Prepare

What you need

- ❖ Towels: For the washing and drying of many toes
- ❖ Bowls: Make sure you have enough bowls to be able to have fresh water for washing and rinsing
- ❖ Liquid Soap: Not a necessity, but a nice touch

Things to be considerate of

- ❖ The opposite sex: Guys wash guys' feet, gals wash gals' feet
- ❖ Religious upbringing: Be sensitive to where your group is coming from
- ❖ Know your group: Be sensitive to the bonding of your group
- ❖ Earn the right: Make sure you have enough meetings under your belt for your group to know your heart and get the full impact of the foot washing
- ❖ Know your options: If someone in your group has limitations (i.e., a lady may come wearing stockings, person may have an open wound or cast) or is uncomfortable with the washing of feet...
 - 1) See if you can wash the hands
 - 2) See if the spouse (if there is one) can wash the feet
 - 3) Give the person the right to "pass"

Attitude and objectives:

- ❖ Be in an attitude of prayer for what God can do in and through you. Communicate servanthood. Let servanthood. Let them understand the attitude of humility (both on the "giving" and "receiving" end). Pray for the best time to do a foot washing in your group. Timing is everything.

When to Implement

Under "How to Prepare" for a foot washing, we talked about the importance of earning the right to do a foot washing. When to implement a foot washing in your "group time" can be as important as "earning the right". There are three primary places we would recommend you insert a footing washing:

1. During a break in the magnification section of your group
2. During a break in the maturity section of your group
3. At the closing of your group

A special time of prayer for each person as he gets his feet washed can be added to the foot washing time.

Some Neat Ideas

- 1) After the foot washing, you may want to give each member of your group a new pair of socks to put on to enjoy the rest of the group time.
- 2) Before sending a member of the group on a mission trip or to multiply a new group, do a foot washing to serve them before they go out to serve.