

"Kneeling Love"

John 13: 1-17

1/23/22

Discussion Guide

To prepare for the study, have someone read the passage slowly while everyone else closes his/her eyes to imagine what happened during the evening meal, the day before Jesus would die.

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

² *The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.*

⁶ *He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"*

⁷ *Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."*

⁸ *"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."*

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

⁹ *"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"*

¹⁰ *Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean.*

¹² *When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.*

Share your personal reflections on the story. What did you imagine? What stuck out to you or struck you?

1. "For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves?" Luke 22:27 How do people answer this question today? How does the world define "greatness" or importance? Contrast that with how Jesus defines greatness and importance.
2. A chief characteristic of God in the Bible is that he "comes down" to us. Share a time when God "came down" to you to rescue you or speak to you a timely word.
3. Kneeling love is a love that "stoops down." Share ways we can apply this to our lives. Does it work? Does it demonstrate the love of God to others? How can we "come down" for others in a

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way that is redemptive? Can we practice stooping down to help others in ways that are not redemptive or loving?

4. Kneeling love also involves coming down to serve. One way Jesus illustrated the kind of service he was talking about was by washing his disciples' feet. Move this example into life today. Brainstorm ways we can "wash other people's feet."
5. Have you ever experienced a foot washing ceremony? Some churches practice this annually as part of the Maundy/Thursday service. What did you think about it? Do you think we have taken Jesus teaching a little too literally and not seriously enough? It's one thing to repeat what Jesus did in worship, it's another thing to practice the spirit of the action in everyday life.
6. Are you familiar with the football term: "To take a hit?" Share ways we can "take a hit" for others. Share ways we can "take a hit" for our community. Share ways we can "take a hit" for Christ and his ministry.

Do you think most Christians "take a hit" for their church or are they too self-protective?

7. How did the analogy "take a hit" bring home to you what Jesus did for you on the cross?
8. Compare and contrast kneeling love to worldly love.
9. What's the difference between basing God's love on our love for others and basing our love for others on the love God has for us?
10. Is it hard for people to accept kneeling love from others? Peter had a hard time with it. Initially he would not allow Jesus to wash his feet. Have you seen people reject this kind of love? Do you have a hard time receiving kneeling love from others?
11. Compare and contrast the world's motivation for service and the Christ's motivation for service.
12. Do you know people like Keanu Reeves who is blessed beyond belief and they struggle with their prosperity so they became philanthropists in order to feel good about themselves. Is there anything wrong with that? I mean, the end result is the same. The person is helping those less fortunate. Does our motive for serving really matter as long as the end result is the same, we serve rather than remain selfish?
13. Have you been able to internalize Jesus entering into your life to wash your feet? Do you see him stooping down into your life to do whatever it takes so you can thrive and experience the abundant life he offers?
14. Final thought, reflections, questions.