

## Washing Feet

### Scripture Reading — John 13:1-17, 31-35

*Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.  
— John 13:14*

The retreat we planned while I was a navy chaplain needed a concluding service that included everyone. Since participants would come from many faiths or none at all, it had to be something all could share in. We decided that a footwashing ceremony like the one Jesus led would yield the experience of giving and receiving grace.

The participants sat barefoot in a circle. After reading from John 13, I gave a brief message. Then, with a bowl of water and a towel, I began by washing the feet of the woman to my left. She then took the towel and bowl, knelt, and washed the feet of the person to her left—and so on around the circle. My feet were washed last. I thought some might find washing someone else's feet objectionable. Instead, several recoiled from having their feet washed. Grace, I saw, can be more difficult to receive than to give.

Maundy Thursday commemorates the command Jesus gives in John 13. "Maundy," from the Latin *mandatum*, means "command." Jesus said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." Christ didn't just wash people's feet; he humbled himself (Philippians 2:5-8) from his place as Lord in heaven to become a human servant, to grace us with eternal life. By washing feet, he showed us how to accept grace, in humility.

### Prayer

*Lord, we are so proud. Thank you for not only washing our feet but also cleansing our souls through your broken body and shed blood. May we receive your grace and share it gracefully. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Christianity](#), [Discipleship](#), [Grace](#), [Life](#), [Emotions](#), [Pride](#), [Seasons](#), [Easter](#)

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