

*retreat
@home*

Wash my feet?

DAY 4: THURSDAY

Wash my feet?

PREPARE: Go to your chosen prayer place, settle down and become still. Take some deep breaths and slow your breathing. Relax and come to rest. God is here to meet with you.

OPEN: *I open my hands and say, "here I am God..."*
I open my ears and say, "I am listening God..."
I open my imagination and ask, "lead me God..."

ASK: Become aware of how you are feeling today, name those feelings out loud to God. Ask God for whatever you sense that you need in this time of prayer today.
Be bold to ask - God loves to give.

GOSPEL READING: John 13: 1-15, 34-35

Read today's Gospel passage through slowly two or three times until you have a clear sense of its flow.

MEDITATION: Imagine Passover as a highly regimented family Christmas. It's always a family affair and you know exactly what will happen without exception or deviance.

You enter the family room, dimly lit, a long low table set out as always for this one particular night. Four cups of wine are set at each place, each with their own meaning and taken in strict order, bowls with wine and vinegar for dipping with the correct food at the correct times.

You are given the same seat between your older and younger siblings, the same food is brought to the table in ceremonious order. The evening air is quiet, weighted with symbolism and reverence for the ancient stories.

As the evening progresses and wine is drunk the mood lifts, and the quiet buzz of conversation fills the rooms and neighbourhood.

For the disciples this is possibly the first time they were taking Passover away from their families, imagine sitting among them...

What sense of familiarity is there? What sense of strangeness?

For the meal Jesus took the traditional role of the head of the household, which meant taking the role their fathers took in the meal.

When the disciples saw he then took the undignified pose of a servant, removing his clothes and putting on a towel to wash feet, how do you think they felt? How would you feel?

Imagine Jesus approach you:
water basin in hand, towel around waist...

You're used to servants or slaves presented like this, but Jesus?
How do you feel having Jesus wash your feet?

CONVERSATION: Coming out of your own imagining of the story, take a few moments to talk it over with God as if you were telling a friend about what just happened. What did you notice? What were the feelings that arose in you? Did anything surprise you? Was there anything uncomfortable? Do you sense yourself wanting to make any particular response?

ENDING: End your prayer, perhaps shaping one sentence that captures what you want to say to God. Move to somewhere different - make a hot drink - take a few moments to jot down your thoughts.

REVIEW & RELISH: If you are able to find another slot in your day, return to your prayer place, read the story and take the journey in your imagination once again. New things may emerge or you may simply find yourself relishing the earlier insights more deeply.

THREE KEY QUESTIONS:

HIS STORY - What does it mean for Jesus to wash our feet?

OUR STORY - How are we to love one another as Jesus exemplified and commanded?

MY STORY - What might be stopping me from adopting a posture of humility?

CREATIVE IDEAS: Adopt a kneeling pose as though washing feet, imagine washing another's feet in that pose, what feelings emerge?

RETREAT ON THE MOVE: Write the words from John 13:14-15 on a card and attach it to the bathroom mirror. Reflect on these words every time you wash your hands, or speak these verses at bath time with your children.

EXPLORE FURTHER:

Youtube: 'The Holy Cutzpah of Feet Washing' TEDxSanDiego by Rabbi Laurie Coskey, who tells the story of how a symbolic and subversive act of foot washing started a movement against the deportation of immigrants in San Diego.



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