

Jesus Washed Feet, Should We?

In John 13, after Jesus had instituted the Lord's Supper, we find that he washed his disciples' feet (vs. 4-16). Many times the question arises, "Since Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, should we not wash one another's feet?" Some in the denominational world have used this as justification to have a "foot washing service" as a part of the worship to God.

Washing feet is also mentioned in Luke 7 where a woman washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Then it is mentioned in 1 Timothy 5 as one of the deeds that would characterize some widows.

The usual mode of travel in Jesus' day was walking. The roads and pathways were usually dusty. One of the signs of hospitality in that time was to wash (or, have a servant to wash) the feet of a guest when they arrived in your house. This seems to be the thought in Luke 7 and seems to be given as a symbol of hospitality in 1 Timothy 5. It is certain that the lesson Jesus taught in John 13 was that of humility and service.

Saints still need to be humble in the sight of God (James 4:10) and in this humility be willing to do anything they can to relieve the distress of another - including washing their body (not just feet). We should show hospitality to those who visit us, but washing another's feet is not necessarily the only way to manifest this. And, we all (not just widows) should be active in doing good deeds.

To go through a ceremony of washing another's feet when they don't need washing is NOT a show of humility nor godliness. So far as I can see it is NOT something to be done in worship to God.

Let us leave it as the Bible does - a symbol of hospitality and good works. Let us manifest hospitality in other ways and do all good works expected by God - but let us not fall into a ritual of washing feet in applying the Scripture improperly.

- by J. F. Dancer, Jr.

Bible Classes

I attend because they help me grow in grace and knowledge. I share in the lessons and thoughts from various ones. There my children learn lessons that will help preserve them from the pitfalls of life and prepare them for heaven and eternity. My participation shows to the world my interest in the church and spiritual things - which may influence others for good. My concern for others, my children and my own soul will not let me willfully neglect such activity.

Now, suppose you make a list of reason why you do not attend the classes:

- "I'd rather sleep late."
- "It's too much trouble to get up and get the kids ready. "
- "There's something else I had rather do."
- "The teacher doesn't interest me."
- "I'm good enough and know enough already. "
- "I need the extra rest (so I can work more overtime and/or engage in more recreational activities)."

Go ahead, make your list. Then present it to God when you pray! If you think God will accept such excuses, I suggest you read (before you reach judgment day) Matt. 6:33; Matt 25, and Rev. 3:14-21.

-by Hershel Patton

Membership in a Local Congregation

Questions about membership in a local congregation often arise - questions like: When? How?

Why? We believe that many such questions can be answered by studying the case of Saul (Paul) when he returned to Jerusalem following his conversion:

"And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus ..." (Acts 9:26-29)

Notice the things we learn from this text:

- The action was immediate. There was no long delay on Saul's part before seeking to identify with God's people in Jerusalem. Oftentimes folks today wait months, even years, before identifying with a local congregation.
- It was Saul who took the initiative in this matter. The KJV says "he assayed to join himself to the disciples". Other versions say "he tried to" or "he was trying to": Clearly, he made the effort. He did not wait for others to approach him.
- The church put him to the test. They needed to know of his conversion and his faithfulness. Evidence was presented to them to verify that Saul was a faithful Christian. They were not obligated to receive him into their fellowship until they were convinced of his proper standing before God. And, too, observe that Saul was not "put off" or turned away by their desire to know these things about his former life.
- As soon as he was a part of that congregation, he got actively involved in the work that was being done.

Surely we can all learn some important lessons from this about membership in a local church. Are you are member of a sound congregation? Are you active and working? If not, why not?

- by Greg Gwin