

Last Supper Foot Washing/Communion Service

A Maundy Thursday Service

Introduction

This Last Supper/Foot Washing service offers participants an opportunity to enter into the Holy Week story by observing and walking alongside Jesus and his followers on the night of the Passover. Participants are invited to do that through this service of scripture, prayer, sharing of a simple meal, participating in foot washing, and listening to reflections that explore what some of Jesus companions may have been thinking that night.

The service takes place around tables where people share a simple meal (such as soup, pita bread, hummus and raw vegetables). There is a head table, at which the Last Supper scene is set and Jesus and his friends are seated. In addition to the food that is on the rest of the tables, the head table is set with bread & wine, as well as a basin, towel and water pitcher. There are foot washing stations set around the room (we chose to also have a hand washing station for those who preferred that option). The service ends with everyone following Jesus out to the "Garden of Gethsemane" where Jesus invites us to stay, watch and pray with him.

Order of Worship

Welcome

Scripture texts:

Luke 22; Mark 14; Matthew 26

Leader: Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.' They asked him, 'Where do you want us to make preparations for it?' 'Listen,' he said to them, 'when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters and say to the owner of the house, "The teacher asks you, 'Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' " He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there.' So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the

Passover meal... When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them,

Jesus (*standing, looks at his followers and everyone else*):

I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' (*Sits down again*)

Leader: And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said

Jesus: "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me. One who is eating with me. They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, "Surely not I"

(Jesus' friends and disciples begin to murmur amongst themselves "Surely not me." "Who then?" "Surely none of us would betray Jesus." Soon the murmuring dies down.)

Leader: While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it, he broke it and gave it to them, saying,

(Jesus stands, and goes through the motions of blessing and passing the bread, etc.).

Jesus: 'Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

Leader: And Jesus did the same with the cup after supper, saying,

Jesus: 'Drink from it all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'

(Jesus passes a cup with a cloth to one side of him, each take a drink, wipe the cup, and pass it to the next person. The person at the end walks the cup to the other end of the table, and the cup continues to be passed.)

Invitation/Prayer

Jesus, be present at our tables,
at our basins,
and in our hearts as we pray with one another.
May your Spirit move among us in water, soup, and bread,
so that we might become your living body
and reflect your holy passion for love and justice.
In your name we pray. Amen.

Meal

Near the end of the meal, the characters come and share their thoughts:

Woman with the blood flow:

You might be surprised to see me, a woman, here at this Passover meal with Jesus. There are a number of surprising characters here.

I have been in Jesus' circles ever since the day I had enough courage to reach out and touch him. I still don't know what made me do it. I was not usually such a courageous person. In fact, ever since I had my problems with bleeding I stuck pretty much to myself – not because I wanted to but because I was labeled "ritually unclean." I was bold that day – and I just grabbed his cloak – just for a moment. And then I stood there, stunned – a distinct energy circled throughout my body. Jesus knew too. I was so afraid – terrified, really, when he stopped and asked who had touched him. Part of me wanted to just slip away and hope no one would ever know. But then, I looked up and I saw him – I saw his face and I knew that I must come forward. When I told him my whole story he was kind and merciful and said "your faith has made you well."

Ever since that day I have followed Jesus. There's a whole group of us that travel together. We're quite the motley crew! (*Indicating the people seated at the table*) Men and women of sullied reputations, former tax collectors, rich, poor – each one of us has had their own secret pain – but Jesus touched and healed us all.

I was a woman, who was ostracized – but now I am part of a beautiful community. I was a woman who wasn't allowed to touch and eat with others – but now I am welcome at the table! What a gift!

Mary Magdalene:

I too have been welcomed to this table. I'm Mary Magdalene. You may have heard of me – my reputation seems to get around. I have been a victim of rumor and judgment my whole life. People think they know who I am, what I stand for. They judge me by the clothes I wear, by the company I keep, by the way I talk.

But, I'm telling you – all that doesn't matter. I know the truth of who I am and my inherent worth. Jesus has a way of touching you on the inside, healing the scars and the wounds that dwell in the dark spaces, in the hidden and secret places within our souls. Jesus has a way seeing beyond the surface and has more love to offer than anyone I have ever met in my life. My life has changed so much since Jesus embraced me in the circle of his friends –

since I have learned about forgiveness, and have come to know the love of God. I know who I used to be, and I know who I am now – there is nothing he can't heal.

There is an ominous feeling here tonight – do you feel it? My skin crawls and my nerves are on edge. I'm afraid – I'm very afraid and have an overwhelming sense of sadness. Those words about betrayal... about remembering him when he's gone, about his body and blood. *(sighs)* It's all very confusing. But I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. I knew I had to be here with Jesus tonight.

Scripture text:

John 13:3-5

(As this passage is being read, Jesus gets up, takes off his "outer robe", ties a towel around himself and begins to wash his disciples feet.)

Song:

Hymnal Worship Book 449 Jesus took a towel (v.1)

Peter:

(As Jesus continues to wash the feet of his followers, and music continues in the background, Peter gets up and begins his monologue.)

Look at him – look at him there on his knees. The great teacher – on his knees!

Jesus named me Peter - "the Rock" because, sometimes, I can see clearly who Jesus is. And yet I also struggle like everyone else. I have strong faith, and yet I also have strong wonderings.

Jesus is like no other – his teachings, parables, miracles. I believe he's called to greatness. I'm just not completely sure what that means. There was a parade fit for a king – and yet Jesus chose to ride a donkey. I believe Jesus can accomplish great things and yet he goes about it in ways that I just can't understand.

Look at him – on his knees acting like a servant, not a king. I really don't want any part of that – "you will not wash my feet!" Yet, I want to live my life for him and in his service. But how, if he wants to serve me? Must I allow him to serve me – to touch me, to wash my feet, to love me? Perhaps I need to allow him to love me so that I might come to know and understand him fully.

There is energy in the air tonight. There are rumblings around the table. I sense that our band is breaking. Jesus suggested that one of us will betray him. Please Lord, don't let it be me. Please don't let it be me.

(Peter pauses, almost as if he is in prayer – then looks up again.)

Still washing feet? Perhaps it means that I will share in the kingdom. In that case, Lord, wash not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well!

(Peter heads back to the table to take part in the foot washing.)

Foot & Hand Washing

(Judas exits)

Song:

Hymnal Worship Book 449 Jesus took a towel (v. 2)

Judas:

(Voice comes through the sound system, but Judas cannot be seen)

I guess you all know me – at least my reputation. I'm the disciple called Judas Iscariot – the one who betrayed Jesus. I was there that night – at that last Passover meal – what you now call "the Last Supper." Jesus washed my feet that night. I received the emblems of the sacrifice and the promise. And I was the one to leave – to go and alert the temple authorities to come and arrest my Lord – my friend.

Oh yes, he was my friend. But he wasn't being the Christ I thought he should be. I expected him to overthrow the Romans and clean up our temple. He was just so very peaceful – so loving. I guess I thought I could speed up this whole process – you know, force his hand – if I got him arrested. Then he would have to fight back. Then all those people who sang their alleluias and waved their palm branches when he marched in Jerusalem would have to rally around him and become an army. But oh, I never thought that Jesus would be betrayed by everyone! I never thought Jesus would have to face the cross alone and undefended! Oh, I am the one you all blame – but I'm not the only Judas. We were all Judases. We are all Judases. We all turn our backs on him.

(People are invited out to the "Garden of Gethsemane" All process quietly out to the "garden" outside.)

Scripture

Leader: When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them

Jesus: You will all become deserters; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.

Leader: Peter said to him

Peter: Even though all become deserters, I will not.

Leader: Jesus said to him

Jesus: Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.

Leader: But he said vehemently

Peter: Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.

Leader: And all of them said the same. A little later they went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples

Jesus: 'Sit here while I pray.'

(All sit or kneel down as Peter, James and John follow Jesus)

Leader: He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them

Jesus: 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.'

(Peter, James and John sit down to pray, but as Jesus prays, they soon fall into sleeping positions)

Leader: And going a little farther, (*Jesus goes down on his knees*) he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said

Jesus: ‘Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.’

Leader: He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter

Jesus: ‘Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; (*Looking up at everybody*) The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ Stay here with me. Remain here with me. Watch and pray.

Song:

Hymnal Worship Book 242 Stay with me

Blessing

(Depart in silence)

Wanda Roth Amstutz, Josie Winterfeld (Canada), 2012. Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church.
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