

COMMUNION

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John 13:5-8

April 06, 2024

Seventh-day Adventists traditionally practice Communion 4 times per year, not only partaking in the bread and grape juice, but also in the washing of each other's feet = women in one room, men in another.....

In days gone by, the foot washing was always well attended. Someone would be at the piano, quietly playing. The ladies would be praying for each other. It was a big deal.

I have noticed, however, that as the years have gone by, fewer and fewer wish to participate in foot washing. The excuses are many and varied:

"I didn't shave my legs."

"I don't like people touching my feet."

"It's difficult to get up and down off the floor."

"Covid!"

"I don't want to take off my shoes and socks."

And my favorite, "it's icky."

Sound's a lot like Peter, don't you think?

I picture Peter drawing back in horror as Jesus got down on the ground, basin of water at the ready.

"Are YOU going to wash MY feet?!"

"Yes."

"Oh no you're not!!!"

Remember Jesus' response? "Okay, but if you don't allow me to wash your feet, you have no part with me."

What was so important about Jesus washing Peter's feet and Peter allowing it?

Having your feet washed and washing someone else's feet are both acts of submission and humility and certainly, for the later, is an act of servanthood.

Jesus' disciples had a problem with humility and servanthood and more than once Jesus had to set them straight:

Matthew 23:11-12 - The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Mark 10:42-45 - And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Even now, in the hours before His death, Jesus' disciples were arguing over who would be the greatest in His kingdom. They expected to be in places of honor NOT grabbing an old towel to wash dusty feet. No doubt, all his disciples were uncomfortable with their Master doing the work of a servant, but we can always count on Peter to say what everyone was thinking.... "YOU wash MY feet? No way!"

Jesus, ever the teacher, desired to educate His disciples, one last time, that His kingdom is made up of servants. If the Master was willing to wash their feet, than in humility and gratitude, they should remove their sandals and, in turn, in humility and servanthood, wash feet.

God's Remedy for Selfishness and Self-exaltation is humility and servanthood and before Jesus' disciples could partake in the Last Supper – where Jesus would invite them to accept His sacrifice on their behalf – they had to lose their self-seeking, selfish and bitter spirits.

Fast forward 2000 years..... The importance of foot washing has not changed. God does not live for Himself. He is not self-seeking, selfish or self-exultant. This ideal of ministry was demonstrated in the life of Jesus and was a living example of what it means to minister.

Notice the words of Paul in Philippians 2:5-8:

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death -- even death on a cross!

Jesus is our example. What He is we should be. Washing another's feet and allowing our feet to be washed, is designed to bring us down off the pedestals of our own making to the humility of heart that will lead us to serve each other. It prepares our minds to accept Jesus' invitation to take His body and blood into ourselves and be transformed into His image.

When Jesus was done washing the disciples' feet, He said, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

This service was to be observed by Jesus' disciples through all the ages as a way to prepare their hearts and keep in mind His lessons of humility and service.

In an age where self-exaltation and pride are regarded as something good, washing someone else's feet and allowing our feet to be washed is more important than ever.

Psalm 139:23 - Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.