

HE CHOSE A TOWEL

(John 13:1-17)

Before he died, Jesus had the chance to summarize the purpose of his life using a powerful symbol. He chose a towel. Why a towel? Because...

JESUS CAME TO SERVE

- **HE SERVED to demonstrate his love** (1)

It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

- **HE SERVED because he was secure** (3-5)

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

- **HE SERVED to leave us an example to follow** (14-17)

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

QUOTES OF NOTE

We live in a culture fascinated with stars and celebrities. We are exhorted to stand out from the crowd, to have others admire and envy us, to make a name for ourselves. But this admiration, which is really self-admiration, is one that crowds out the possibility of love, for love places the beloved foremost in life, it sees us make sacrifices for the happiness of the beloved, sacrifices that dent ambition and stunt careers, sacrifices that say there are others more important than ourselves—those we love. For love means that our deepest source of happiness comes in bringing happiness to the beloved. This is a radical way of living, one in stark contradiction to the siren call of self-satisfaction, one that defies the call to live for self. (Chris Hedges, *Losing Moses on the Freeway*)

It is always the secure who are humble. (G.K. Chesterton, on *awad.org*)

Teach us to care and not to care. (T.S. Eliot, *Ash Wednesday*)

The only really happy people are those who have learned how to serve. (Albert Schweitzer, in *The Purpose Driven Life*)

Simply put, leadership is about getting things done through people. When working with and getting things done through people, there will always be two dynamics involved—the task and the relationship. It is easy for leaders to lose their balance by focusing on only one of these dynamics at the expense of the other. (James C. Hunter, *The Servant*)

If the leader is not accomplishing the tasks at hand but is only concerned with the relationship, that may be good baby-sitting but certainly not effective leadership. The key then to leadership is accomplishing the tasks at hand while building relationships. (James C. Hunter, *The Servant*)

Christian leadership is accomplished only through service. (Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer*)

The spiritual authority of Jesus is an authority not found in a position or a title, but in a towel. (Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*)

Questions for reflection

1. At this time, what symbol would summarize the purpose of your life thus far?
2. Are you satisfied with this, and if not, how would you like to see it change in the next few years?