

HE CHOSE A TOWEL—Discussion guide

(John 13:1-17)

1. Fill in the chart below by identifying what kinds of service you are comfortable and uncomfortable providing and receiving.

	Comfortable	Uncomfortable
Providing		
Receiving		

2. Why do you think you filled in the chart the way you did? (To the best of your ability, explain your reasons to the group.)
3. Read John 13:1-17 below and answer the questions that follow.

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.²The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. ³Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;

⁴so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” ⁷Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.”

⁸“No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” ⁹“Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!”

¹⁰Jesus answered, “A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of

you.” ¹¹For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

¹²When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. ¹³“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

- What do you think were some of the reasons Jesus washed the disciples’ feet?
 - What is the meaning of the dialogue between Jesus and Peter?
 - What important principles of life and leadership do you learn from this passage?
4. How would you have felt if you were *receiving* the foot washing from Jesus and how might you have felt *providing* it for the group?
 5. What could you do in the coming week to increase your comfort level in either receiving or providing service or to thank those that provide it for you?

The only really happy people are those who have learned how to serve.

- Albert Schweitzer, 20th century philosopher, physician, humanitarian