

LIFE GROUP GUIDE

3.23.25 | John 13:1-17

LEADER NOTES

- **You don't have to answer every question.** Choose the ones that connect best with your group.
- **Encourage every voice.** Set time limits or break into smaller groups when needed.
- **Use the questions as a guide.** You're not giving a lecture—you're helping people engage the text and share their lives.
- **Begin with prayer.** Gather together as a group in a comfortable setting. Take a moment in silence, in the presence of Jesus and each other. Have one person ask the Holy Spirit to lead and guide your time together.

In this week's sermon, Jesus redefines greatness by using His power to serve – and calls His followers to do the same. The teaching text is John 13:1-17. Supporting passages are Philippians 2:5-11, Luke 22:24-27, Galatians 5:13, and Matthew 20:25-28.

WARM UP

1. Have you ever been surprised by someone's act of service toward you? What happened – and how did it make you feel?

This is a great on-ramp to today's passage, where Jesus serves in a way that surprises everyone.

2. If you had all the power in the world for 24 hours, what's the first thing you'd do?

This sets up the shock of what Jesus does in John 13—He has all authority, and yet He washes feet.

3. What point or idea from this weekend's message stuck with you most?

Let this question set the tone – see where the Holy Spirit is already stirring hearts.

HEAD

Read John 13:1-17 together. Have someone read a different translation (NLT, ESV, Message, etc.) if possible to hear a different perspective.

1. Verse 3 says Jesus knew the Father had put all things under His power. What do you notice about what He chose to do with that power?

This is a hinge moment in the Gospel. Jesus moves from public ministry to private preparation. Help your group notice that Jesus' power led Him not to dominate, but to serve—because He was secure in His identity. You could also read Philippians 2:5–8 to show how this scene is part of a much bigger pattern in Jesus' life.

2. Why do you think Peter resisted Jesus washing his feet? How would you have felt in his place?

Peter's discomfort is honest—and relatable. This is a great time to ask, "What makes it hard for you to receive help or grace from someone else?" Draw out how deeply counterintuitive Jesus' way really is.

3. Jesus said, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (v.15). What do you think He wants His disciples—and us—to take away from this?

Make sure the group avoids over-spiritualizing this. Yes, it's symbolic—but it's also practical. Foot washing was lowly, messy, and necessary. Serving like Jesus often looks like noticing needs and stepping in, no matter the cost.

Optional Passage: Read Luke 22:24–27, which occurred the same night. Jesus' words about true greatness provide additional clarity to His actions here.

HEART

1. Jesus washed Judas' feet knowing Judas would betray Him. What does that say about Jesus' love? How does that challenge you?

This is one of the most powerful parts of the story. Don't rush it. Let people sit with the weight of loving someone who might not love you back. Tie in Romans 5:8 if helpful: "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

2. Who's someone in your life who models this kind of servant-hearted love well? What impact has it had on you?
3. When is it hardest for you to serve others the way Jesus did? What tends to get in the way?

Be ready for honesty—fatigue, fear of being taken advantage of, self-protection. Affirm that recognizing the barrier is a first step toward change. You might follow up with, "What would it look like to bring that to Jesus this week?"

HANDS

1. Take 60 seconds, write down what God has entrusted to you—resources, skills, relationships, platforms, etc. Read 1 Peter 4:10: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others..." What's one thing you've been given that you can use to serve others?
2. Think about your daily routines—at home, at work, or in your neighborhood. Where is one place you could intentionally show up with a posture of service this week?

The goal here is to help people apply Jesus' example in the normal rhythms of life. It doesn't have to be dramatic—just faithful. Invite ideas like showing up early to help, offering to listen, or doing an unseen task that blesses others.

3. Before closing in prayer, take a moment of silence. Invite people to ask: "Lord, who are You inviting me to serve this week—and how?"

Stillness creates space for God to speak. You don't need to rush. After praying, you might invite group members to share if something came to mind during that moment.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

This week, look for one specific opportunity to take on a humble, behind-the-scenes act of service—something you wouldn't normally do, something no one may notice, something that costs you. Whether it's cleaning up, showing up, or speaking up—do it not for credit, but because Jesus did it first.

Come ready to share what happened at your next group meeting.