

Jesus Washes Feet

Washing the Disciples' feet is the ultimate symbolic act of humility for Jesus. While this is a beautiful moment in scripture and has a great deal to teach us, it is not meant as a prescription of literal devotion. We are not called to wash feet. We **are** called to treat other people with care and devotion. Here are some things to focus on based on Jesus washing feet.

If we want a modern equivalent of washing feet, we need to remember why they did it. First century Mediterranean society walked in sandals on dirt roads. With a great deal of livestock around, there's a chance that a disciple stepped in "something." So when you arrive at someone's house, there would be a bowl of water and a servant to wash your feet. Jesus taking on this role would have caused some confusion.

If we follow Jesus example, we should look to find actions that are intentional and humble to serve others. They are acts that require setting aside pride to meet a practical, often overlooked human need. If you want to be like Jesus and wash others' feet? Focus on actions that prioritize someone else's dignity over your own comfort or status.

The modern equivalent of Jesus washing feet is any intentional, humble act of service performed by someone in a position of status for someone perceived as having less power or need. Rather than a literal ritual, it is best expressed through acts that require setting aside pride to meet a practical, often overlooked, human need. Examples include actively listening without judgment, cleaning a toilet, or serving the marginalized with genuine, personalized care.

To embody this principle in daily life, focus on actions that prioritize another person's dignity over your own comfort or status:

- **Practice "Hidden" Service:** Perform tasks that are unglamorous or "beneath" your typical responsibilities, such as cleaning up communal spaces or taking on undesirable chores without seeking recognition.
- **Engage in Deep Listening:** Offer someone your full, undivided attention during a difficult time. Truly listening to understand, rather than to respond or fix, is a powerful way to "wash" away the isolation or burdens others may feel.
- **Bridge Social Divides:** Proactively serve or build relationships with individuals outside your immediate social or economic circle. This could involve volunteering at shelters or simply initiating respectful, meaningful conversations with those who are often ignored.
- **Maintain Care During Disagreements:** Choose to act with humility when dealing with someone you find difficult, perhaps by offering help or grace instead of defensiveness.
- **Small, Consistent Gestures:** Simple habits—such as yielding to others in traffic, genuinely waiting for others to finish speaking, or being kind to service workers—can serve as modern, consistent disciplines of humility.

Jesus Washes Feet John 13:1-17
Acton United Methodist Church
Sunday March 1, 2026
Rev. Dr. Matthew D. Stultz