



Twenty-four Feet

(excerpt from *Ready-to-Go Devotions for Mission and Service*)

Focus: Serving the Undeserving

Read ...

John 13:1-17

Reflect ...

It's the night of the Last Supper, and Jesus surprises the disciples by whipping off his cloak and kneeling down to wash the disciples' feet.

As usual, Peter hogs the spotlight—and misses the point. He protests that he won't let Jesus wash his feet, and then he asks Jesus to wash his hands and his head as well.

Of course, the lesson Jesus is teaching has nothing to do with physical cleanliness. By washing the disciples' feet, he's demonstrating servanthood.

We modern readers understand that lesson (even if we fail to act on it in our own lives), but we often miss a more subtle point hidden in this story: Jesus washes the feet of *all* the disciples—including Judas. Even though he knows Judas will betray him, even though Judas doesn't deserve to be treated so well, Jesus stoops down and washes his feet, serving him as if he deserved to be served. That's just the way Jesus is—and the way we should be.

React ...

If you wash enough feet, you'll get kicked in the face (not literally, let's hope!). You'll encounter someone who's ungrateful, who resents your interference in his life, who throws away the gift you offer. When that happens, you can give up on him or love

him anyway. You can use his ingratitude as an excuse to give up on people or as a reason to serve people with even more love. There's no doubt what choices Jesus made.

Have you encountered ungrateful people on this trip? Write down what they did and how you reacted. How did your reaction make the situation better or worse? What could you do differently next time?

Prayer Focus ...

It's hard to serve people who seem undeserving. Pray for the wisdom to see beyond people's negative attitudes and actions and for the strength to love them anyway.