

Week 45 :: Community Values : Part 2 - Humility

Daily Reading for Week

1 Corinthians 13-14, Psalm 147
1 Corinthians 15-16, Psalm 148
2 Corinthians 1-2, Psalm 149
2 Corinthians 3-4, Psalm 150
2 Corinthians 5-6, Psalm 1
2 Corinthians 7-8, Psalm 2
2 Corinthians 9-10, Psalm 3

Resources for Week

Read Scripture Video: [2 Corinthians](#)

INTRO TO DISCUSSION

Last week while reading 1 Corinthians, we tried to practice the communal value of faith together. This week, we will participate in an exercise in humility.

Back in the Spring, much of our church participated in a Maundy Thursday footwashing exercise in which we took turns washing one another's feet. This exercise stirred up all sorts of discomfort, resistance, and raw emotion. The exercise, which has been a Holy Week tradition throughout the duration of church history, is rooted in Jesus' washing the feet of His disciples. This scandalous act in John 13 revealed and challenged the disciples' proud insistence that their public leader, Jesus, not appear like some lowly servant. But what it meant to be part of this King's Kingdom, Jesus responded, was to do as He did and lower oneself to the place of servant.

"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 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. Very truly I tell you, 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." (John 13:13-17)

Later in the New Testament, Paul would exhort the church in Philippi similarly, telling them to imitate Jesus' humility, which was displayed in His willingness to take the place of a servant. For many, what the Maundy Thursday exercise brought up was a real resistance to acting as someone else's servant or being perceived in a position of servanthood or inferiority. In other words, the exercise stirred up pride and revealed how terribly difficult it can be to practice genuine humility.

But the footwashing exercise revealed another angle of humility and pride aside from resistance to servanthood. It also stirred up resistance to being served by others. This is indeed part of the genius of Jesus' insistence on washing His disciples feet. He knew that not only did they disdain the thought of their leader humiliating Himself, but they also hated to feel an embodied sense of their own neediness. It takes humility to serve, and it takes humility to allow ourselves to be served. For many, washing someone else's foot is much easier than allowing our own feet to be washed. But unless we can humble ourselves to be served, we will never truly be able to practice the humility of genuine servanthood. Particularly in San Francisco's current culture of independence and self-sufficiency, one of

the greatest challenges to following Jesus as a community is expanding our capacity to confess need, ask for help, and depend upon one another. Learning to live in this kind of humble interdependence will be a necessary and indeed counter-cultural project that could have an incredibly renewing impact on the city around us. This week, we will quickly look at both Jesus and Paul's invitations to practice a life of humility and then engage in an exercise to allow us to respond to this invitation.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Group Exercise:

This week we will be engaging in a large group prayer exercise surrounding our value of humility.

Read and Reflect (15 minutes): Read John 13:1-17, Philippians 2:1-18, and 2 Corinthians 12:1-10. Then sit silently for five minutes to reflect on the humility of Jesus and the invitation of God to boast in your weaknesses.

Sharing Needs and Asking for Help Exercise:

Reflect: Take another five minutes to reflect silently on the following prompts:

1. What is one practical need that you have that others could help you with?
2. What is one way that someone in the group could help you with this need in the next week? Note: We mean real, tangible needs. This is not about prayer requests. For example: What is a physical or circumstantial limitation you are experiencing that you cannot adequately overcome on your own? Are you in financial need? Are you experiencing any strong emotions that make you feel the need for comfort, company, or care?
3. No need or topic should be off limits. Be brave in be transparent about money, relationships, and anything that might feel too embarrassing to expose.

Share: Use mutual invitation to have every single person express a need and ask for help. Practice vulnerability and humility both by being willing to share a need and request help from others as well as by being willing to help gently clarify the needs of others and sacrificially meet their needs. (A quick note about requests: they are not all automatically entitled to a "Yes" response. Sometimes requests must be met with a No, which happens when individuals take honest inventory of what kind of help they are capable of offering.)

Respond: As each person shares, allow the group to adequately respond before moving on. If more information is needed, ask clarifying questions. Once a need and request have been effectively communicated, pause for 30 seconds of silence to reflect on this request and then invite the group to respond. During the silence, consider:

1. Do you understand the request?
2. Does it seem like a fair request?
3. Are you able to meet the need as requested, or are there other ways you would like

to offer your support? *Do not move on to the next person until the group has actually responded to the need shared. For anyone who is unable to articulate a need, take 30 seconds to hold this brother or sister before the Lord, and then allow the group to suggest a possible perceived need and offer for help. Use the following format:*

Group member: "(Insert person's name), I feel like you might need (insert perceived need). Is this true?"

Original sharer: either "Yeah I do need _____," or "No I don't need _____."

If the response is no, allow space for another person to try again. If it's yes, then continue by asking this person how the group can help with this specific need. If the person is able to articulate an action that would be helpful, sit with this and then respond accordingly. If he or she is unable to ask for help, repeat the above process by offering potential suggestions for what might be helpful commitments and allowing them to accept or reject the suggestions.

Debrief: Discuss what this exercise stirred up in you personally and what it revealed about the community.

1. Did you love this or hate this? Why do you think it made you feel this way?
2. Were requests accepted and needs able to be met?
3. How needy is this community?
4. How humble, vulnerable, and interdependent is this community?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

No small group discussion tonight.