

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – January 1, 2023

Theme: Servant Leadership Topic: Christ, our example of a servant leader

Main Texts: John 13: 1-17

Key verse: John 13:15 – *‘I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you’* (NLT)

INTRODUCTION: The dictionary defines a servant as a person who performs duties for others. A typical example of a servant is a person who is employed in a house on domestic duties or as a personal attendant. The slogan “Servant Leader” has become quite popular in modern leadership circles and vocabulary. However, few leaders in history have exemplified servant leadership the way our Lord Jesus Christ did. And notwithstanding His incredibly successful ministry - the crowds, the amazing miracles, signs and wonders, the huge followership, and near celebrity status in His days, He consistently shunned the limelight and high praise. Instead, He would be seen with the ordinary people, looking for ways to serve them, rather than being served. Our Lord Jesus embodied servant leadership. Eventually He would even give His own life for the salvation of all. This is the opposite of what we see in both our religious and secular leaders today. Are we ready to follow this example?

1. **(a) In our text, Jesus knew that the time of His death had come. Instead of brooding over the coming pain and humiliation, He did something for His disciples. What reason does John 13:1 give for this extraordinary action? (b) Compare Jesus’ action and that of Judas in John 13:1-2. Whose response would you prefer from your leader and why? (c) Jesus also washed Judas’ feet despite knowing what Judas had determined to do. What further insight does that give you about servant leadership?**

In Jesus’ days on earth, people mostly wore sandals and traveled on foot. And the terrain was dusty. So, foot washing was a common element of hospitality to guests (Luke 7:44). This task was considered the most ignoble of tasks. And it was this basest of tasks that our Lord can be seen doing in John 13:1-17, a chore ordinarily reserved for the basest of servants at the time. As John 13:1b puts it, He was motivated by love, “... *and now He loved them to the very end.*” (NLT). Without Love for the led, The Leader would find it difficult to serve them faithfully to the end. And it will even be near impossible to serve an enemy as Jesus served even Judas, who betrayed Him. ‘*So, He got up from the table, took off His robe, wrapped a towel around His waist, and poured water into a basin. Then He began to wash the disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel He had around Him.*’ (John 13:4-5 NLT)

2. **Read John 13:3- 8; Philippians 2:3-7 (a) What do you think could have informed Apostle Peter’s response in verse 6? And how do we see that play out in our cultures and society today? (b) What personal and cultural barriers did Jesus have to overcome to serve His disciples? (c) How do these cultural and personal barriers hinder us in being servant leaders, or discourage servant leadership in our society? What needs to change if we must become or have servant leaders?**

In many cultures, it is common for people to get uncomfortable when a leader wants to serve; and some even think it impolite to be served by a leader. Coming from a society that respected religious leaders, one could readily relate with Peter’s objection to Jesus’ action of washing his feet. He could not understand the humility of Christ. Then, after washing the feet of the disciples, Jesus firmly instructed them, “*And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other’s feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.*” (John 13:14-15 NLT)

3. **(a) What does Jesus’s foot-washing command in John 13:15,17 mean to us and how does it apply in our modern context? (b) Jesus promises God’s blessing for those who follow His example of servant leadership. Let participants list some of the possible blessings. See Philippians 2:5-9; 1 Peter 5:5-6 (c) What practical steps should we consider because of this study?**

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, thank You for setting a perfect example of servant leadership for us. Grant us grace to find our significance in who You say we are so that we can let go of all the titles and positions which hinder our efforts to be servant leaders. Amen.*