

Preparing for a Foot Washing Ceremony

Advance Preparation

For the people whose feet are being washed:

- Direct them to come to the service with clean feet, in clean footwear. When Jesus did the foot washing, the disciples' feet were already clean, because a servant would have washed them when they arrived. Therefore, there is no need for soap and scrubbing.
- Socks are fine, since they can be easily removed and put on again, but direct women not to wear stockings or tights.

For the person/people who is/are washing the feet:

- You need a large bowl, a large jug, and at least one towel for each person doing the foot-washing. The towels should reflect the subdued context of the occasion, preferably self-coloured and in a muted colour.
- Some churches prefer the Minister, or other appointed leader, to wash the feet of everyone; other churches prefer to have the leader wash the feet of the elders, or deacons, with them then washing the feet of others in the church. Decide which practice you wish to follow.
- The foot washer(s) may be seated, bending down to wash the feet of those who stand as they file past her/him, or there may also be a chair in front of him/her, enabling the other persons to sit while their feet are washed. Alternatively, the foot washer(s) may also be standing, but bending low each time she/he washes someone's feet, whether that person is standing or sitting. Decide which of these options you prefer.

Other considerations

- Think about separating the men and the women. There is a practice kept by some of having men and women in separate rooms; but you may be happy to have them in separate groups within the same room.
- Choose an appropriate room. Quite often the foot-washing is done in a separate room from the rest of the worship service for logistical reasons; people leave the church, move to the room for the foot washing, and then return to the church for communion. There needs to be plenty of room for the foot washing itself, and there is a risk of water spillage.
- Before the foot washing, set up the required seats for the foot washers and those whose feet are to be washed. Also, make sure that there are seats for any of those waiting in line who might benefit from them.
- Before the foot washing, fill the jug(s) with warm water and place it/them, along with the bowl(s) and a towel(s), in the room which is to be used.