

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Sunday 02 Aug: Barry sharing his testimony & Emi sharing thoughts on the Lord's Supper.

Saturday 8th August - 8 am:
Men's Breakfast. Note - change of date.

Sunday 09 Aug: Church service. Malcolm continues the series on John 13. *A Community of Intimacy: We are known and we don't have to hide.* John 13.6-11

Sunday 16 Aug: Church service.

Sunday 23 Aug: Church service.

Sunday 30 Aug: Church service.



Other Events

Saturday 20 to 24 August: Thames Valley Teen Camp

Friday 11th - 13 September: UK & Ireland Young Professionals Retreat in Chesham. Registration: <https://iccmisions.churchsuite.com/events/gtrhbmni>

Sunday 27 September: London-wide service. 11 am, Friends House, Euston Road, London.

Sept 30th - Oct 04th: Spirituality Retreat. <https://shop.thewayministry.global/2026-csr/home>

Friday 30th October to Sunday 01st November: Autumn Student Retreat for the UK & Ireland.

A Long, Loving and Painful Goodbye

Have you ever had to say "Goodbye" to someone for ever? Tough, isn't it? Chapters 13 to 17 show Jesus preparing his followers for his departure and their mission. These instructions are found only in John's Gospel. As we study through chapter 13 (and read chapters 14-17 for context), I believe we will gain great insights into how to live as 21st century disciples.

Change in Status

In the first 12 chapters of John, the disciples have been relatively two-dimensional. They've been Jesus' helpers and the recipients of his teaching. Now look at the change in the way Jesus talks to and refers to them. They are: "his own", 13.1, "little children", 13.33, 21.4-5, "friends", 15.15, "the men you gave me", 17.6, "those who are mine", 17.10, "my brothers", 20.17.

They've gone from being lowly helpers to partners in his ministry. This is also our status today in Christ. We are not add-ons to the Kingdom. We're fully fledged partners. How does that make you feel?

Peer-pressure

The story goes that some people sat round a table. A fire started in a wastepaper bin in the corner of the room. No one moved - everyone acted as if it wasn't there. The fire grew larger and more dangerous. If something wasn't done soon their lives could be in danger. Still no one moved a muscle.

What one person in the group didn't know was that the others in the room were all actors. The whole thing had been set up as a psychological experiment into the effects of peer-pressure. The investigators wanted to see if the person who wasn't an actor would do something about the fire, or whether they would sit still. Peer-pressure was so strong that the one non-actor was willing to allow all their lives to be endangered.



Taking the Initiative

What does it take to get us active in serving? In the culture of Jesus' day a slave would have been expected to wash the feet of the people around the table. But it appears there is no 'servant' in attendance in this upper room. The disciples and Jesus are reclining around the table (not on individual chairs). Their feet are elevated off the floor and quite near each other – possibly touching their neighbour. The climate is hot, the roads are dusty and the feet are very, very smelly! Dinner had already been served – the feet ought to have been washed long before.

I fancy there was quite a bit of tension in the air. Everyone knew someone ought to step into the role of a servant, but no one wanted to make the first move. Who was it going to be? Certainly it shouldn't be Jesus. It would have been unthinkable for a disciple of a Rabbi to wash someone's feet, let alone a Rabbi himself.

Jesus stoops

But Jesus stoops to perform a task that was considered too menial even for his disciples. How do you suppose the disciples felt as Jesus went round? I guess there was a convicted, stunned silence. Perhaps you don't feel it's your 'place' to take initiative, but let's be like our Lord and serve anyway. Is there something you can do for someone? Do it. Don't wait for someone else. Do it today - do it now!

Counter-Cultural Love

Jesus expected his followers to love each other in the same way he had just demonstrated his love for them (Jn 13:34-35). He isn't expecting us to turn up at church with bowl, soap and towel, but he is expecting us to practice an almost 'weird', un-normal love for one another. To the world this will look very odd.

Because we are His brothers and sisters, we are called to take the initiative in self-abasing love, seeking the good of our fellow brothers and sisters even to the extent that we go against cultural and social norms. Who can you love in a 'weird' way this week? Get out your 'towel' and show someone some truly Christ-like love.

Your brother, Malcolm

Charity number : 1207942

Reflection Questions

1. Jesus was willing to take the role of a servant and wash his disciples' feet. What might it look like for you to take the initiative and serve someone this week?
2. Jesus calls his followers to love one another as he has loved us (John 13:34-35). In what ways can you make your love for your brothers and sisters more visible and Christ-like?
3. The disciples moved from being observers of Jesus' ministry to partners in his mission. How does knowing that you are "his own" and called to serve alongside him change the way you see your role in the church?

Watford Contribution Details

Church bank account: Three Counties churches of Christ
HSBC

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Watford Media



P.S.

What did you hear from Barry's testimony today that inspires you to believe that some of your friends who are far from God could find their way back to Him?

When Emi shared about the Lord's Supper this morning, what encouraged you to draw closer to Jesus this week?