

## John 13:1-7 (part 2) Sermon-Based Discussion Guide

**Purpose of Discussion:** To help us see that living lives of practical service to others is the path toward our deepest happiness.

**Sermon Refresher:** When Jesus humbled himself to wash the feet of his disciples, he was showing us that he cares not just about the condition of souls but also the condition of our world that needs renewal. Foot washing is thus anything that renews or restores the flourishing of people or this world in some way. The more we learn to live lives of “foot washing” service to others and the world, the deeper our joy in God will be.

**Icebreaker:** Dave shared a lot of great stories of how people at The Crossing are involved in service to our city. What was one of your favorites?

**Transition:** We find those stories inspiring because they tap into something deep within us. Hearing those stories reminds us that we find our truest, deepest happiness when we are serving others.

### **Discussion**

1. In the sermon, Dave said: “the more we live for our own comfort and the more we serve ourselves, the more our lives shrivel into a little ball of unhappiness.” How have you seen that to be true in your own life?
2. Read John 13:3-5, 12-17 out loud. Let’s focus on what Jesus said in v. 17. Jesus said “blessed are you if you do them.” In what ways are we blessed through serving others?

As we just mentioned, there are lots of practical ways that we are blessed through serving. The word “blessing” in the Bible refers to something even deeper. It refers to that deepest and most satisfying kind of happiness that the Bible calls joy. Let’s read another passage that shows the link between serving and joy.

3. Read Acts 20:32-35. In this passage the apostle Paul is giving his farewell speech to the church in Ephesus. He wants them to remember something crucial: that it

## John 13:1-7 (part 2) Sermon-Based Discussion

is more blessed (more joyful) to give than to receive. According to these verses, how did that truth affect the way Paul lived among the Ephesians?

4. Both in John 13:17 and in Acts 20:35, Jesus seems to be motivating us to serve others by promising us joy. Some might say this is a self-centered motive – that we should serve others because it helps them, not because it makes us happy. Is seeking our own joy in God through serving others actually self-centered? Why or why not?
5. C. S. Lewis wrote an interesting paragraph about this. Let's read it together.

*We must not be troubled by unbelievers when they say that this promise of reward [blessing/joy] makes the Christian life a mercenary affair [self-centered motive]. There are different kinds of reward. There is the reward which has no natural connection with the things you do to earn it, and is quite foreign to the desires that ought to accompany those things. Money is not the natural reward of love; that is why we call a man mercenary if he marries a woman for the sake of her money. But marriage is the proper reward for a real lover, and he is not mercenary for desiring it. A general who fights well in order to get a peerage [title/rank] is mercenary; a general who fights for victory is not, victory being the proper reward of battle as marriage is the proper reward of love. The proper rewards are not simply tacked on to the activity for which they are given, but are the activity itself in consummation. (from The Weight of Glory)*

How does Lewis help us see that seeking greater joy in God through serving others is NOT actually self-centered?

**Digging deeper (optional):** Read Hebrews 12:2. According to this verse, what motivated Jesus to endure the cross? What implications does this have for our discussion?

6. What barriers keep you from living more and serving more for the joy of others?
  - How could remembering that serving others is the path to your deepest joy help you to overcome barriers toward serving others?

## John 13:1-7 (part 2) Sermon-Based Discussion

### **Sharing and Prayer Time idea:**

What are some ways that you are involved in serving others in the community? Take time to thank God for those opportunities and pray for strength for people to continue serving.

If your small group is already involved in serving others, pray for those you serve. Pray for eyes to see the needs you can serve. Pray that we will live not for cheap, flimsy thrills but for our deepest joy in the joy of others.

If your small group does not presently have a way to serve together, bring that up as an idea and pray for God to lead your group toward some practical way to serve. Consider making it a goal to find one way to serve this summer together.