



MAUNDY THURSDAY WORSHIP GUIDE

April 9, 2020

Prepare three spaces in your home for this Maundy Thursday worship. In your living space, place a large bowl of water and some bath towels. On your eating table, place some bread and cups with something to drink. Finally, decide on a spot in your yard or outdoor space to allow for a moment of prayer.

ENTERING INTO WORSHIP

Gather in your living space with your Bibles to begin worship. One person should take the role of leader for the service. If you are worshipping as one, speak the role of leader and silently pray the community responses, connecting your prayers to the Body of Christ.

Leader: We join a solemn journey of three days that has changed the world and our own lives. Followers of Jesus have been taking this journey since His first followers took it, long ago.

All: **This is the night of love.** *(pause)*

Leader: On this night, Jesus took a towel and basin and washed His disciples' feet. He told the disciples to do the same for others to show their love for Him and for one another.

All: **This is the night of love.** *(pause)*

Leader: On this night, Jesus broke bread and shared wine with His followers for the last time and invited them to remember Him, to encounter Him anew, whenever they did the same.

All: **This is the night of love.** *(pause)*

Leader: On this night, followers of Jesus invited others to begin with them a solemn vigil of prayer and fasting until the day of Christ's resurrection is fulfilled.

All: **This is the night of love.** *(pause)*

This is the night of love. And so, on this night, we sit together that we may love one another as He has loved us.

SERVING EACH OTHER

Reading from John 13:1-7, 12-16, 34-35

Tonight, the Gospel is read three times with guided moments of reflection between each reading.

After the first reading, pause to notice what stood out to you and perhaps jot down a word or two to remember it.

For the second reading, listen more intently around those words or themes to hear more clearly what impression the Spirit is making on you.

For the third reading, listen and decide on one action you will take to obey the Spirit's promptings from the Word.

After a suitable time of silence, invite all who wish to share briefly what they experienced in the Gospel hearing. This is a time of sharing and listening only, not conversation.

Leader: This is the night of love. Jesus washed his disciples' feet, reversing roles of master and servant. He told them to do the same to show the world God's love. On this night, we wash each other's feet, obeying Christ's command to love one another as He has loved us.

The leader takes the bowl of water and washes the feet of the next person. Likewise, each person then takes the towel to wash the feet of the next, and so on, until all have been washed. If you are worshiping as one, pour the water over your feet or hands and spend time in reflection.

SHARING A COMMUNAL MEAL

Move to your eating table, where you have prepared bread and cups of drink. The leader continues.

Leader: This is the night of love. And this is the table of love. At this table, Christ, who loves us, is with us. He is with us, and we are His. We belong to God. And so, we pray:

All: We are Yours, all Yours, blessed Triune God, all our lives, all our thanks, all our praise, all our fears, all our grumbling, all our hesitations, all our loves, all our joys, all our passions, we give them all to You, with bodies, and minds, and voices. Yours, all Yours!

Leader: You are holy, O God! You are worthy, O Christ! Worthy in Your birth! Worthy in Your living!

All: Worthy in Your loving! Worthy in Your serving! Worthy the night You took a towel and basin, washed Your disciples' feet, and taught them to do likewise.

Leader: Worthy, too, the same night we betrayed You, when You took the bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to Your disciples. Worthy when You told them, "This is My body broken for you. Remember Me."

All: We remember.

Leader: Worthy when You took the cup, praised God and shared it, and worthy when You said, "This is My blood of the new covenant for you. Remember Me."

All: We remember.

*Although what we eat plays an important part in nourishing our body, where we eat and with whom we eat nourishes our soul. Eating together was an important aspect of early Christian life, and we can see throughout the New Testament how Jesus found significance in sharing a meal with others. Just as Jesus did on the night before He died, **take** bread, **ble**ss it, **break** it, and **share** it with one another. As our bodies are nourished through a communal meal, draw closer to one another, remember Christ's sacrifice, and share this love in the world.*

PRAYING WITH THE FATHER

Move to your chosen outdoor location to spend a moment in prayer. Before you begin, take some time to listen, smell, and feel God's creation around you. The leader then continues.

Leader: Jesus would often take His friends to the Garden of Gethsemane for rest and prayer. But this night was different. Jesus was overwhelmed. The name of the olive grove itself contributed to the agony of the scene. Gethsemane means "oil press." It was as if Jesus' sorrow was so intense that He was being pressed...squeezed...crushed ...under the weight of His coming sacrifice. Even so, His conversation with the Father remained "not My will, but Yours, be done."

Spend time in prayer. Pray earnestly. You may pray silently, aloud, or with others near you. After your time of prayer, the service concludes with this benediction.

BENEDICTION

This is the night of love. On this night, eternity begins for you and me. This is the night of love. Amen.