

**GROW. PRAY. STUDY.**  
**First United Methodist Church - Weekly Study Guide**  
*“Equipping people in becoming deeply committed Christians”*

**The Power of Serving Others (July 26-31)**

*It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him . . . Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. **John 13:1-5, 14-15 (NIV)***

Today we are focusing our time together on the idea of servant leadership. Too often we fail (or refuse) to serve because it makes us feel weak and vulnerable. Jesus, however, calls us to serve and challenges us to understand real power is found in serving. It is when we serve others that we find ourselves closest to God.

This week we are going to spend out devotional time pondering the idea of servant leadership. How was Jesus first a servant.....and how are you living out the call to serve others?

**Monday- READ Mark 10:35-45**

Two ambitious brothers sought an “in” for high posts of power in Jesus’ coming kingdom. The other disciples were upset—not, it appears, because they thought the request was wrong, but because they hadn’t thought of it first. Jesus said they had all badly misunderstood the way his kingdom works. He did not come to be served, but to serve. Jesus said being “great” among his followers meant being “servant of all” rather than “lording it over” people. What are the qualities of people you think of as “great”? How do those qualities fit with Jesus’ way of defining greatness? What can you do to open yourself to God to grow these qualities in you?

***Pray the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer***

**Tuesday- READ Luke 22:19-32**

Luke includes some of the same language we saw in Mark yesterday. But Luke puts it in the setting of Jesus’ last supper the night before he died on the cross, a reminder of how far Jesus went in being a servant. He adds Jesus’ touching words about praying for Peter, and the call for Peter to be a source of strength to others. “My body given for you....my blood poured out for you.” Have you ever had a boss or leader serve you in a spirit like Jesus’? If so, how did that affect you? How can servant leadership be more effective than self-serving, “perk”-demanding leadership?

***Pray the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer***

**Wednesday- READ John 13:1-17**

Jesus' act was shocking. "Losing sandals and personally washing someone else's feet was considered servile, most commonly the work of a servant or of very submissive wives or children" (*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*). Jesus said he did it as our "Lord and Teacher." He called us to have the same spirit of service for one another. Many of us are high achievers, more at ease with "earning" than with "receiving." How are you doing at admitting your need, and receiving Jesus' grace and love as a gift you neither deserve nor have earned?

***Pray the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer***

**Thursday- READ Jeremiah 29:1-14**

2 Kings 24-25 tell about the Babylonians' capture of Jerusalem. They were destructive and brutal, smashing the city and hauling its leading citizens into exile. Yet from the ruins of Jerusalem Jeremiah wrote to the exiles, telling them to pray for the prosperity and peace of Babylon. Serving even enemies (Matthew 5:44) was a part of Jesus' prophetic heritage. In Jeremiah 28:3, Hananiah (a false prophet) insisted the Israelite exiles would be back in Jerusalem within two years. Jeremiah promised a future with hope, but said it would take seventy years to arrive. Can you continue trusting and serving even if the outer rewards of following God are deferred? What helps you grow in patience?

***Pray the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer***

**Friday- READ Philippians 2:25-30**

Meet Epaphroditus, one of the unsung heroes of the Bible. He left his hometown, Philippi, and went to serve the needs of the apostle Paul. We don't know a lot of details, but it's clear that as he pursued this mission, he nearly lost his life. Even as he sent him back to his church family, Paul rejoiced in the dedicated, loving service this man had given him. Paul began this chapter by calling Christians to have "the same attitude of mind that Jesus had" (Philippians 2:5). Epaphroditus' example says that this is not just theory; it actually happens. In what ways are you able to make yourself radically available to serve others?

***Pray the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer***

**Saturday- READ James 1:2-3**

Today you will be reading the passage we will use in worship tomorrow. Pray that God will open your heart and prepare you for a powerful worship experience as we come together tomorrow as the body of Christ.

***I invite you to pray the following prayer:***

*Dear God,*

*As I read this passage today help me do so with an open heart, sincerely listening for your voice in my life. Use this passage to prepare me for worship tomorrow. As I read it help me to set aside my own agenda and my own desires so that I may come to worship tomorrow prepared to be molded by you as I continue my journey to becoming a deeply committed disciple of yours. In Christ's name I pray, AMEN*

Here at FUMC we believe part of becoming a Deeply Committed Christians is praying daily. If you find yourself struggling with what to say, we suggest you try praying Wesley's Covenant Prayer.

***A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition***

I am no longer my own, but thine.  
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.  
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,  
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.  
Let me be full, let me be empty.  
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.  
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.  
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit  
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.  
And the covenant which I have made on earth,  
let it be ratified in heaven. AMEN