

Ritual of Washing feet and Reconciliation

Rev. Raymond Hayes & CH. Brenson Bishop

(NOTE: This foot washing service is best after a time of Confession and personal reflection. This time of reflection is important to give meaning and context to the Veteran. The Veteran can have a pastor, or another Veteran, as a confessor for spiritual direction. This worship service of reconciliation is a rite of passage from the past into the present and is an act of faith - walking into Christ grace - in hope of a new life only informed by our past)

WELCOME: *Recognition of Veterans (Veterans in Combat Boots in front of Community)*

Call to Worship: Psalm 6: 1-7,

Leader: O Lord, Rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath

Veterans/People: Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing; heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled.

Leader: My Soul also is greatly troubled, But you, O Lord – How long? Turn, O Lord, deliver my life; save me for there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise?

Veterans/People: I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping.

ALL: My eyes waste away because of grief; I grow weak because of all my foes

(Silent Prayers for things remembered: Things unspoken – but to God and or a confessor)

All: PS 6:9 **“The Lord has heard my plea, the Lord Accepts my prayer.”**

HYMN/MUSIC: If Needed as Appropriate – Numerous places – depending on number of participants

Scripture Lesson: From the Gospel of John 13: (10 -15 Min Sermon)

Washing of Feet:

1. *Ministry team /Veteran/ assists removal of Combat Boots –*
2. *Ministry Team Washing of the Feet – (Music as Appropriate)*
3. *Veteran is assisted or singularly Puts on new Shoes- representing - new life – new vocation*
4. *Veteran Walks and is greeted by Ruling Elders/ family/ Veterans of Church*
{NOTE: In case of an amputee Gloves may be used or another item determined by the Veteran}

5. *Veterans Await Affirmation by congregation/community* {Can be right hand of fellowship}

Affirmation and Welcome by Congregation/Community:

LEADER: As Christ Cleaned the Feet of the Disciples so yours are cleaned.

PEOPLE: Walk into new life among us, with us, Honor all that you have lived before, by how you walk with Christ this day forward.

Veterans: "I give my past to Christ - Look and see who Christ has made me now."

Benediction:

Leader: As Christ Spoke: (John 14: 27)

ALL: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

Worship Note:

(Note: This worship service is best after a Veterans retreat run by Veterans and ministers of the church with counselors - ending with a service for personal cleansing followed by the foot washing service of reconciliation in actual worship - the foot washing is a service for restoring them to community and another identity.)

About the author: Brenson P. Bishop is the staff chaplain at the Robley Rex VA Medical Center in Louisville and is a retired chaplain and colonel in the US Army Reserve.