

## SERVICE



Words relating to 'servant' and 'service' are central in Christian theology. Some of the most important prophecies in Isaiah speak of the coming of the 'Servant of the Lord' and his role as a 'suffering servant.' That is why Jesus said that he 'came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' Jesus washed the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper. This turned upside down the normal relationship between master and disciple, leader and follower. In many ways, this astonishing action symbolizes the essence of the Incarnation: God stooping to share the human condition. Jesus is very clear about the meaning of his action: '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.' The parable of the Good Samaritan shows we should serve those in need whoever they are. Such service is not offered to gain some advantage for ourselves. 'Going the extra mile' involves sacrifice, putting ourselves out for someone else's benefit. Serving God means serving others. It also means that we cannot serve other masters as well - such as money. However, the Christian message is equally clear that service is not all about restrictions. It is precisely in a life of service that we become most truly free.