

# Exegetical Survey of John 13:1-17: Implication of Jesus' Servant Leadership Model for the Church and Nigerian Society

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## Abstract

Leadership in Nigeria across ecclesiastical and societal strata had over the years proved to be a game of the hawks and kittens through radical and arbitrary expression of power and authority. All who had played host to the power equation among the leadership in Nigeria had exhibited leadership mentality that had been anchored on that of tribalism, feudalism, dictatorship, and nepotism. These indices invariably had been obvious in the church leadership wherein the leadership had lord it over God's heritage. This abnormality in the nation leadership has affected negatively the psyche of average Nigerians. Consequently the National as well as international image of the Nigeria had been dragged to the mud. This paper in a vivid lucidity examined through critical biblical exegesis, Jesus' model of exemplary as well as servant leadership from John Gospel 13:1-17; unraveling its laudable lessons for the church and Nigerian society.

**Keywords:** key words, exegesis, Jesus' Servanthood, Jesus' leadership model

## 1. Introduction

Humanity, socially and ecclesiastically has been plagued by the menace of incessant "rush for power, a jogging for preeminence" (Amadi-Azuonu, 2000) radical and arbitrary expression of power and authority. Her leadership mentality has been anchored on that of dictatorship, feudalism, tribalism and nepotism. This ethical attitudinal leadership menace has created an immense leadership vacuum. It has engendered social and ecclesiastical distrust, corruptions, varied dimension of vices, societal rivalry, sectional militancy, proliferation and commercialization of religious institutions. Ekwunife (1995) described the cause of this leadership menace from the ecclesial perspective as a "distorted image of Christ." Osinbajo (2006) called it "a disorderly society" Odey (1999) captured it in his very words: "Here in Nigeria, the violence, the oppression, the lie and the kleptocracy or the organized robbery squad presided over by the leaders (Leadership) under the veneer of leadership, bare its venomous fang on the masses. They forced some out of the Country, jailed some and killed some. At the height of this madness, the real and the unreal security agents in the country and all other hoodlum are 'paid' to terrorize the entire populace. Thus they behave as if to say that the rest of us were no longer human beings. This exasperated leadership woes call for a wholesome, "leadership renaissance modeled in concrete exemplary attitudinal values". (Paschal, 2003). These values should invoke a personified mentality of sincere service to God, and to the people in love and humility. This leadership vacuum that calls for ardent search has triggered off voluminous search from various fields of studies. Scholars have lent their wealth of knowledge and billions of Naira is spent in search of developing an exemplary leadership values. However, the problem remains unabated. Notwithstanding in the field of biblical scholarship a ray of light is seen in Christ Jesus as a perfect example of leadership. This is modeled after the symbolic example of Jesus' act of servant leadership narrated in John's gospel chapter 13:1-17 also known as foot-washing events. This paper will re-echo the voice of biblical Scholars through the exegesis of Johannine foot-washing narrative. On this wise, we shall exegetically review this act of foot washing performed by Jesus Christ to his disciples as they reclined in the upper room. The focal point of this exegesis will concentrate on the perspective of servanthood, humility, and love in leadership and its social ecclesial implication today.

## 2. The Sitz im leben-Social context of Johannine Foot-washing in John 13:1-17

Many attempts have been made to outline John's Gospel, but there is no broad consensus: According to Fuller (2000) the structure of the Gospel is loose but hinges on three major divisions:-

- A. Jesus' Public ministry chapter 1:19 – end of chapter 12.
- B. Jesus private ministry Chapter 13 – 17;
- C. Jesus' Passion and resurrection chapter 18-21.

The book has a distinct introduction or prologue setting the theological scene in the pr-existence and deity of Jesus (John. 1: 1-18).

The passage under our consideration is set within the middle section of the three main structural divide of the gospel as identified by "the private ministry of Jesus with his disciples "(Chapter 13 – 17); these five chapters present the last interaction between Jesus and his disciples before his arrest and passion.

In this major section, Jesus turns in private to his disciples during his final Passover. It centers on just a few days of Jesus life-before his passion and resurrection. His private teaching to them mostly focus on service, washing of their feet, the coming of the Holy Spirit, in terms of revelation and persecution, and a lengthy prayer for his

disciples and their followers. As regards the setting of this event, John did not tell us where the incident recounted here (13:1-17) takes place, but it can be assumed that it took place in the upper room mentioned in Mark 14:14-15 and Luke 22:10-12 in the city probably of Jerusalem. In the first introductory part of this section the Apostle (thirteenth chapter of this gospel,) John records a ceremony that Christ performed and instituted on the very last night of his life. (John. 13:1-17). It is pertinent to note that the other three gospel writers did not address this act at all in their biographies of Jesus' life and ministry. Rather they focused on the bread and the wine that Christ instituted that same evening. John does just the opposite. Keese said, "We must remember that John as last of the gospel writers fills in some of Jesus acts and statements that the others left out of the gospel" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/foot-Washing>).

The root of this practice appears to be found in the hospitality customs of ancient civilizations especially where sandals were the chief footwear. A host would provide water for guests to wash their feet. This is mentioned in several places in the OT. (Gen. 18:4; 19:2; 24:32, 43:20; I Sam. 25:41). I Sam 25:41 is the first passage where an honoured person offers to wash feet as a sign of humility. However, the offering of water and washing the feet by a slave was also a sign of courtesy even when shoes were worn: This is the work of a slave. It was regarded a menial job that even disciples would not do it for their own teacher.

In John, 12 Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus feet, presumably in gratitude for raising her brother Lazarus from the dead and in preparation for his death and burial. According to Hultgren (1982) "foot washing was not primarily a ceremonial custom but it was practically important because people walked in sandals through dusty, muddy and manure filled streets." Washing someone else's feet were regarded as one of the most demeaning task anyone could perform. It was reserved for household slave even not for Jewish slaves. However, for Jesus, the act of foot washing is an expression of ardent love, humility and service.

### 2.1 The Symbolism of Johannine Footwashing

The symbolism of Johannine foot- washing has been assigned various meanings. The major lines of interpretation have been summaries by Bultman (1971) in his massive survey of interpretation from the apostolic fathers to the contemporary times. In the modern era, according to him, two major streams of interpretation have developed: either the foot washing is seen exclusively as an example of humility given by Jesus, and therefore it has no sacramental or salvific significance or it is understood to have further meanings as well while still embracing the first. These according to Hultgren (1982) include:

- Purification of believers (through baptism, the word of Jesus, or believe in Jesus).
- A sacramental meaning (baptism, Eucharist, penance or even the foot washing itself as a sacrament)
- The significance of Jesus' submission to death on the cross
- An act having a typological background in the O.T.
- An account, which functions as a theology for practice of foot washing in the Johannine Church.

### 2.2 Contextual Analysis of the Text.

Contextual analysis of our periscope portrays that the foot washing with its accompanied dialogue (13:1-11) is not in unity with the discussion, which follows (13:12-20). In 13:7, Jesus says to Peter, what I am doing you do not understand now, but after these things (*meta-tauta*) you will understand) Some have assumed that this statement excludes the possibility of 13:12-20 has been united with 13:1-11 originally: For the statement at 13:7 implies that it is only in the future Jesus' action can be understood. Whereas in 13:12-20 the action is given an interpretation (i.e. as an example of service and humility for Jesus' disciples) Hence the disciples will not understand until after resurrection is indicated at 2:22, 12:16, and 14: 26. Other indications which had led to the conclusion that 13:1-11 and 13:12-20, is not to be considered literal unity from the beginning are also noted. ( Bultman, Brown, et al.1971). Their conclusions suggest the conflation of two independent texts or the hand of an Interpreter who gave further interpretation to the symbolic act is obvious in the text. Hence, the first interpretation gave an assurance of salvation whereas the second gives the blessing to the obedient.

### 3. Problem of Textual Variants and Solving the Textual Equation in John 13:1-17

There are three main or serious textual problems in the passage under consideration. However, other minor variations could also be observed. In 13:2 *γινόμενον* -This verse has two main textual problems. The first involves a single letter: *δείπνον γινόμενον* - It is generally taken to mean, "Supper being ended (AV) more whereas *δείπνον γινόμενον* means "during supper (RSV). The former reading '*genomenou*' is by far the difficult reading, for it stands in opposition to the following context, which indicates that the supper was still in progress (VV.4 and 26). On the basis of what was felt to be superior manuscript evidence ( $\kappa^c$  B  $\Delta$  L WX  $\Psi$  0124 1241  $it^d$  syr<sup>pal</sup> arm eth etc.)

### 3.1 Philology and etymology of keywords and terms.

Some words in this passage demands our careful evaluation for purpose of clarity and understanding. This will

help us come to terms with technical issues in the text. 1) **Πάσχα (Pascha)** Passover =According to Strong (1995:1) this is the Greek spelling of the Aramaic word for Passover from the Hebrew word *Pāsach* “פסח”, in its primary root it means to hop, I.e., figuratively it means to skip over, to spare, or a pretermission or exemption. Technically, it is used to designate the Jewish Passover, the meal, the day; the festival or the special sacrifices connected with it. During the Passover day a year old lamb or kid (Ex.12:5) was killed by the head of the household on Nisan at sundown between dusk and dark (Exodus 12:6). Its blood was smeared on the doorposts and its flesh roasted and eaten by the family during the night of 14-15 Nisan (Ex. 12:81).

In the LXX and the NT, the term is known as “**το πάσχα**”; (**to pascha**) thus, the term usually is applied to refer the whole range of the Passover observances related to the season. However, the Passover speaks voluminously not only in the minds of the Jewish nation but because the eternal Lamb of God will be sacrificed to permanently deal with man’s rebellion (Jon 1:29, 36, Acts 8: 32; I pet 1: 19)

**3.2 Exegesis:** Piper (1964:192) defined Exegesis as that which presupposes textual and literary criticism of the document. The exegesis of the New Testament enable us to know, for instance, whether the text upon which he works represents the original text of the autographs or the textual form of the fourth century. The work also presupposes knowledge of the historical background of the author, the document and its subject matter. Manton (2006) observed that the term Exegesis derives from the Greek word ‘*Exegenomai*’ which means to lead out or draw out. He elucidated on the term contextually. He sees Exegesis as explaining and making clear the meaning of a passage of Scripture (Manton 1996)

**3.3 Sitz Im leben:** This phrase *sitz im leben* appears in this project quite often. It is written in German language. It is a term used by German scholars to describe the settings as well as life situation from which a gospel or passage springs. Onwu (2001) in a vivid manner caught the picturesque of the proper etymology, of the term *sitz im leben* with his Christological lens. According to him: The phrase **Stiz Im Leben** otherwise translated as situation-in life denotes the historical and sociological dimension of form criticism .which calls attention to the vital connection between literary forms and the structures and institutions which scholars have discerned in working with biblical texts and their total cultural background (Onwu 2001)

#### **4. An Exegesis and Critical Commentary on the Text (John 13: 1 – 17)**

V. 1 *Πρὸ δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα* (Now before the feast of the Passover). John means just before the Passover feast. Passover being that mentioned in 12:1. That what is now to be narrated took place on the eve of the Passover, (i.e. on the evening of Nisan 13) is shown by 18:28; 19:14, 31, 42. By this, John clearly distinguishes between the last supper and the Jewish Passover. This contradicts the synoptic version, in which the last supper was the Passover meal, and Jesus died a day later than John allows. However, scholars such as Robertson (2000) argued that Jesus ate the regular Passover meal at the usual time, hence, “Just before” John means, not twenty-four hours before, that is our Thursday evening (beginning of 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, Sunrise to Sunset Jewish day) since Jesus was crucified on the Friday 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. The effort to harmonize the given different between the synoptic and John’s Gospel has produced varied views as regards the date of the last supper. According to Barnes (2000) the simplest solution of the difficulty is to attribute the apparent discrepancy to that loose way of speaking of the feast which suggests that when the synoptic evangelists speak of the Passover they refer to the actual paschal supper; when John speaks of the feast of the Passover or the Passover he refers to the seven days feast of the unleavened bread which allowed the actual paschal supper; however, the dating conflict remains inconclusive among biblical scholars. Notwithstanding, it was before the feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing (εἰδῶς, perfect active participle of οἶδα with a present meaning, to know) that the ὥρα (Horah) Hour (translated time in NIV) appointed for him to depart from this world to the father has come. In addition, he was certain that he is going back to the father; he embraces his mission with confidence. The word *Αγαπήσας* (*Agapesas*) is the aorist active participle of *ἀγαπάω* (*agapao*). The emphasis is that he loved his own. Thus, describing the motivation that had a compelling force on him. It could mean as well “because he had loved them”. Hence, in this context, love becomes an important concept in Christ’s dealing with his disciples. Johannine use of the Greek phrase *Εἰς τέλος ἠγάπησεν αὐτούς*- this implies, to the end or to the utmost. Morris asserts that “both meanings could be intentional, and assumed correct” (Rogers, 1982:214). Thus, the ambiguity is probably intentional for the two meanings are related. Love is the laying down of one’s life and therefore to love completely or utmost means to love to the end of one’s life. In addition, the love that has been evident throughout continues right up to the end; in crucifixion by that we see the ultimate revelation of that love, that is, its full extent. *Εἰδῶς*- knowing- repeated from verse 1, suggest accenting the full consciousness of the event. ... *Ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθεν καὶ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὑπάγει* (from God he came and to God he returns) and the father had given *-ἔδωκεν-* (aorist active, attested to by Aleph B L W) instead of “*δεδωκεν*” Perfect active, all things into his hand. Thus, Jesus is fully conscious of his deity and Messianic dignity; this then is “the basis for his confidence (Haris, <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/John/Jesus-washes-Disciples-foot>).

The phrase *ἔγείρεται ἐκ τοῦ δείπνου* which is translated to mean: ‘He rises from supper’. The term *ἔγείρεται* is present indicative passive. This gives further proof that the meal has not ended but probably was being served or while they were eating. He laid aside his outer garment, “*ἱμάτια*” (*himatia*) which suggests that he was left with his tunic, a shorter garment like a long undershirt- “slaves would be so dressed to serve a meal” (Luke 12:37; 17:8). Then, he tied a towel (*λεντιον*, a Latin loan word, a linen cloth) around his waist *δειξωσεν* (*deizosen*), with which to dry their feet. Obviously, not what one expect from a master to do. A Jewish text says, “This is something a Gentile could be required to do but not a Jewish slave”. (Mekilta on Exo. 21: 2, Citing Lev. 25: 39, 46). Nevertheless, in Jesus’ case there is an obvious reversal of roles with his disciple. This is servanthood in its zenith exhibited by Jesus Christ.

Vs. 5. *εἶτα βάλλει ὕδωρ εἰς τὸν νιπτῆρα καὶ ἤρξατο νίπτειν τοὺς πόδας τῶν μαθητῶν ... διέξωσεν ἑαυτόν.* He poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet. The word *ἤρξατο* ‘began’ (*erxato*) is the aorist indicative middle of *αρχομαι* (*archomai*), it means to begin, thus expressing a deliberate and purposeful act. *ίπτειν* –(*Niptein*) “to wash” is a present active infinitive of *-νίπτω* (*nipito*). This verb to wipe off “*εκμασσειν*” (*ekmassein*) is severally used in Luke and in John for wiping the feet after washing (Lk 7: 38, 44, Jon. 11: 2; 12: 3). These descriptive pictures suggest that a high level of resoluteness and intimacy is apparent in this very act, unlike when Gentile slaves would do the washing. Thus, on that wise Jesus showed his love by this act to his disciples. The implication is that the natural relationship is reversed in an act of love and striking humility.

Vs. 6,7 *λεγει αὐτῷ* - Many MSS indicate the change of subject at this point. A probable interpolation of another text or a kind of repetition is observable in the text. Thus, it suggests a combination of two different sources or texts. This has given the Johannine symbolism “dual approach with varied submissions” (Bultman, 1971:467).

However -*ἔρχεται οὖν πρὸς Σίμωνα Πέτρον λέγει αὐτῷ, Κύριε, σὺ μου νίπτεις τοὺς πόδας;* “Then he came to Simon Peter; he said to him, Lord, does thou wash my feet?” The term “*σου and μου*” are emphatic; hence a special stress lies on ‘*μου*’, as following another pronoun directly. Peter either was amazed with the Master’s condescension even to the level of such menial work. He felt convicted and inadequate for such treatment from the Master. Hence, the disciples had been disputing about precedence (V. 4) and Jesus reminds them, as he had done before on dignity of service and ministry (12:26) as being the high place which “*διακοναί*” (service) occupies in His life and teachings. He illustrates by his action of love and service (cf Lk 22:27) the divine prerogative for the kingdom ethics of love. This essential feature of His mission was what He bids His disciples to follow (V. 16).

Vs. 8. ...*Οὐ μὴ νίψης μου τοὺς πόδας...*(*you may in no way wash my feet to the ages*). In this construction, the resistance was very strong and was attested by the phrase of double negation (*Οὐ μὴ*). Peter’s sense of what is fitting for his Master is completely outraged. In response to Peter’s resistance (V. 8) Jesus says cryptically (*Ἐὰν μὴ νίψω σε, οὐκ ἔχεις μέρος μετ’ ἐμοῦ*) unless I wash you, you have no part “*μέρος*” i.e. inheritance or share) with me. Jesus picks up the challenge of Peter whose act amounted to irreverence and want of confidence. Westcott asserts that “the first condition of discipleship is self-surrender.”

(Harris, <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/John/Jesus-washes-Disciples-foot>). Thus, the fear of loosing fellowship with his Master threw him open to an artificial brokenness –On the contrary, he is still ignorance of his unbroken ness and selfishness.

V. 9, *μὴ τοὺς πόδας μου μόνον ...*, (not my feet only...). “Then it appears that Peter entered into the Master’s thought and saw that this was emblematical of a spiritual cleansing. Therefore, he wishes to be washed completely not only his feet. However, he exhibited his usual characteristic impulsiveness, which revealed that he does not really understand the Master’s act. “A moment ago he told his Master He was doing too much; now he tells Him He is doing too little” (Rogers, 1982).

V. 10. *Ὁ λελουμένος* - He that is bathed, perfect passive participle of (*λῶω*) to bath the whole body (Acts: 9: 37), implies that having bathed the whole body the only thing necessary thereafter is only to wash his feet. Thus, his whole body is “clean” (*καθαρός ὅλος*). It is worthy to note that textual variants and the use of synonymous terms of two different words poses a serious hermeneutical problem and thus assumes varied conclusions from interpreters. Barrett observed, that the statement of V.10 was misunderstood partly because it was not grasped that *λουειν*.’ (*louein*) and *νίπτειν*’ (*niptein*) were synonyms, and secondly, because of the social custom involved” (Robertson 2000). He observed that the text was expanded, regardless of the fact that it introduced the implication that the foot washing was a comparatively unimportant addition to the process of bathing.

V.12. *ἀνέπεσεν πάλιν ...* He sat down again, second aorist active indicative of *ἀναπιπτο*, (*anapipto*) an old compound verb, meaning, to fall back, to lie down, to recline. “*Πάλιν*” (*palin*) can be taken with *ἀναπεσεν*, either as here, or with *εἶπεν*, (he said again). Know you what I have done to you. (*Γινώσκετε τί πεποίηκα ὑμῖν*) by implication it means, “Do you understand the meaning of my act”? The phrase ‘*pepoieka*’ is a perfect active indicative of *ποιέω* (*poieo*) with dative case (*ὑμῖν*) expresses a searching question as regards what he had done to

them, particularly to Simon Peter and Judas.

V. 13. *ὕμεις φωνεῖτέ με Ὁ διδάσκαλος καὶ Ὁ κύριος ...* You call me Master and Lord; “*φωνεῖτέ*” “present indicative active, means to call, to address, this is used to addressing one with his title “*Ὁ διδάσκαλος*” (Teacher) is a nominative form, but really vocative in address with the article called titular nominative.

*Καὶ καλῶς λέγετε εἰμὶ γάρ-* And you say well, for so I am Jesus affirms His own dignity, while stooping to what the disciples counted a menial office.

V. 14. *Εἰ οὖν ἐγὼ* - If I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you ought to wash the feet of one another. Robertson gave an expanded view to mean, “that the disciples of Jesus should be ready, after His example, to condescend to all the weakness of their brethren, is willing to do the meanest offices for them, and to prefer the least of them in honor to themselves” (Robertson, 2000). Thus, by this example the dignity and the duty of mutual “*διακονία*” recommended to Christian disciples will be expressed.

V. 15... *ὕπόδειγμα* (hupodeigma) – means, an “example, pattern illustration.” It is not found again in John, nor was it applied anywhere else in the NT to the example of Christ. Other terms such as *ὕπόδεικμι*, *τύποι*, and *δειγμα*, occurs in the sense of example. Thus by implication the examples shown to them should compel them to keep doing “...ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιῆτε” or keep following in his stead. For Jesus has given the disciples an object lesson in humility to rebuke their jealousy, pride, and strife exhibited before and at this very meal. The lesson of this “example” should apply to all the relations of believers with each other and should be a daily act of love for them.

V. 16. *οὐκ ἔστιν δοῦλος μείζων τοῦ κυρίου αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστε ...* – Lk 6: 40 has “οὐκ ἔστιν μάρτυς ὑπερ τὸν διδάσκαλον,.. and Mt. 10: 24 combines the Johannine and Lucan forms of the saying, it is beyond question that the servant is not greater than his Master (Cf. Lk 22: 27). Thus, it was stated here to reinforce the lesson of the true dignity of service which Jesus has been teaching by examples.

*οὐδὲ ἀπόστολος* - “is he that is sent greater than Him that sent him?” the term- *ἀπόστολος* - is not found again in John, and is here used in its etymological sense of a “messenger” (Rogers, 1982:214) as at 1 Kg 14: 6; 2 Cor. 8: 23, Phil. 2: 25 also this, the phrase, (meizon) greater being a comparative adjective is followed by the ablative case (*κύριε*) “Lord contrast between slave, Lord and “*τοῦ πέμψαντος*” the sending one, contrast with, the “one sent” . Once again, by this Jesus rein forces the dignity of service; hence, he often repeats this logion.

V. 17, *εἰ ταῦτα οἴδατε ...*- “If ye know these things” *εἰ*; is a condition of first class, assured as true, when used with the indicative. “It carries the implication that in fact they indeed know those things” (Bernard, 1958:455). While “*ἐὰν ποιῆτε*” (if you do) suggests the probability of knowing but not doing. The implication is that knowing or hearing with out doing is grossly inappropriate – thus, blessing (makarios) comes when we know and keep on doing.

John in this section (chapter 13 – 17) presents the last interaction between Jesus and his disciples before his arrest. These disciples of Jesus had been with him as from chapter two. They had heard him teach the crowd, heal the sick, deliver the oppressed and experienced amazing miracles. Yet, they still did not fully comprehend who Jesus was neither had they imbibe His given ethics, which were largely in contrast with their familiar social ethics. All was set for Jesus’ death. He knew that it was the hour for him to go back to the father. Judas Iscariot was prepared by the devil for his betrayal (13: 2). The minds of the other disciples were occupied with the death of the Passover lamb, and possibly “quest for preeminence” (Thomas, <http://www.anabapistnetwork.com/node/320>) in the kingdom government of Jesus as he was being expected to inaugurate in Jerusalem. In this context, Jesus said his farewell to his disciples in a most dramatic and symbolic way. John describes the act itself as showing them “the full extent of his love in the symbol of foot washing.

Though Jesus knew his very status and dignity, yet, He acted in great humility to demonstrate the meaning of true love in leadership, and still adhere to his given responsibility. After that, he challenged his disciples, that if he their Master and Lord did it for them, it was an obligation the disciples owe to each other.. Thus, as leaders in socio-ecclesial – positions-we must denounce pride, selfishness, greed and embrace love and humility in the manner of Christ. This is the panacea for greatness and real success.

### 5.1 Implication of Jesus Foot-washing for the Church’s Quest for Servant Leadership

The first glaring factor evidenced from the beginning in this chapter is the manner and, dept of love Jesus have and displays towards his own-his disciples being the prototype of the Church, “Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” Because he loved them, he gave a distinction of this love to his own-in a very practical, selfless, lowly, and humiliating service. He showed them the full extent of his love. Love is the laying down of one’s life, and therefore to love completely means to love to the end of one’s life. He gave them an impression of loving one another with the kind of love shown to them. In addition, the Church should allow this love to guide their daily relationship both to God and to their neighbors. Another implication unveiled was the confidence in which Jesus embraces his “hour”. During the feast of the Passover..., Jesus knowing that his hour has come... The hour speaks of divine obligation, the very purpose why Jesus came into the world, the father’s will for him, it was also referred to as the cup and baptism by Jesus himself (Mk. 10: 38,

39; Mt. 20: 22; Lk 22: 20). Thus, a life that is committed to God in love should always be ready to embrace death at the fulfillment of God's will. On the other hand, death should not be a treat to love as regards God's commandment. Hence, Jesus had told his disciples not to be afraid of those who kill the body but can do nothing to the soul rather to be afraid of Him who will kill the body and cast the soul into eternal punishment (Matthew 10:28).

Similarly, the condescension and humility of Jesus give another implication, challenging the disciples; that the way to greatness is through service. The phrase 'I am in your midst as the one who serves. In demonstrating this, he laid aside his garment, and took a towel, girded himself, pour-water in a basin, and began to wash the disciple's feet, and to wipe them with the towel, which he tied around his waist. By implication, he did not only identify with them but also showed genuine concern to their need and provided the needed solution both physically and spiritually. The call is for today's disciples a prototype depicted in the Church to empty themselves of pride, greed, quest for preeminence, and prefer one another in love, and serve one another.

## **5.2 Implications of Jesus' Servant Leadership model in John 13:1-17 for the quest for Servant Leadership in Nigeria today.**

The implications of Jesus' Servant Leadership model in John 13:1-17 are quite obvious and relevant to our socio-ecclesial (the Church and society) community today. They are also challenging and exciting. In addition, it should be able to address the leadership problems noticeable in our society.

It is of paramount importance hence the ethics of love portrayed in it tends to add eternal values to human governance. The leaders in the Nigeria especially the Christians in Governance should give the distinction of this love through practical and selfless services. They should aspire to love and grow the people in love to by their acts of love to ensure excellence in leadership. They should be able to convince the people of their genuine love by their care to the plight of the needy.

Similarly, Jesus' image of servanthood shows the model requirement for the leadership which is in contrast to political dictatorship, feudal lordship and institutional monarchy prevalent in Nigerian leadership spheres. By this act, Jesus revealed that power should not be seen as a tool of exploitation but as an expression of a divine thrust. ( Onwu 2010)

Another obvious implication from this text discourages the incessant struggle for power at all costs. Hence, leaders should understand that power belongs to God and He gives it to whosoever He pleases. Thus, God is the one who put all things in the hands of Jesus. The implication of dialogue and patience should not be undermined. It should be used to foster unity and to correct the ignorant instead of direct or indirect victimization.

Leaders across the globe especially in Nigeria should endeavour to live an exemplary life of humility and commitment to service, thus, by this they will leave positive impression in the heart of their followers like Christ. It is of paramount importance that leaders should partake in the sufferings, and challenges of their people. In addition, allow the people to have a part with them without attaching unnecessary string to their good gesture. It is necessary for the ecclesiastical as well as political leadership to avoid every exploitative tendency from the fold or personal enrichment and monumental incorporation of business empires in the name of ministries, rather they should commit themselves wholly to the course they are called in all humility devoid of arrogance and greed. Most political leaders of Nigeria over the years had been known for pride, highhandedness and arrogance. Jesus' model of leadership exhibited through humility in service is worthy of emulation by the leadership.

## **6. Conclusion**

Jesus, through the act of foot washing entrusted to his disciples a vivid image of love, humility, selfless service and a model for excellent leadership. His demonstration of love for his own is intriguing leaving definite impression not only in the minds of his immediate disciples but also to every one who would hear or read the text. His disposition to power and service was very complimentary to divine requirement to model a positive ethical image, which will revolutionize every leadership towards unprecedented excellent performance. Nigeria today is in need of servant leaders-who are poised to serve and not to be served. Nigerian leaders in the first republic, such as Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, Abubakah Tafawa Ballewa, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Chief Michael Okpara, Ezeogo Dr Akanu Ibiam were the few leaders Nigeria has had who attempted to serve Nigeria as servant leaders. Nevertheless, Jesus' challenges of servant and humble leadership ideals are laurels today Nigerian leaders must emulate.

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