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## Servant Leadership in the Face of Power: A Study of John 13:1-17 and its Relevance to Nigerian Political Governance

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### Abstract

This article explores the narrative of John 13:1-17, where Jesus washes His disciples' feet, within the framework of Nigerian political leadership. The passage, traditionally interpreted as a model of servanthood, humility, and sacrificial love, is re-examined in the light of the prevailing challenges in Nigeria's political landscape. Nigerian political leadership has often been characterized by authoritarianism, corruption, and a disconnect between leaders and the people. This study investigates how the principles embodied by Jesus in this text can offer a transformative paradigm for Nigerian political leaders. It argues that the act of foot-washing symbolizes leadership grounded in service rather than dominance, advocating for a shift from power-centered governance to servant-leadership models that prioritize the well-being of the people. Through a critical theological reflection, the article explores how John 13:1-17 calls for a leadership ethos that reflects humility, responsibility, and genuine care for the populace, contrasting sharply with the prevalent "godfatherism" and self-serving leadership styles in Nigeria. The study further discusses how Christian political leaders in Nigeria can draw inspiration from the foot-washing episode to reimagine their roles in fostering accountability, justice, and people-centered governance. By examining the socio-political realities of Nigeria in dialogue with the biblical text, the article offers fresh insights into how biblical ethics can inform and reform contemporary leadership practices in the Nigerian context.

**Key Words:** Servant-leadership, power, relevance, leadership, Nigerian

### Introduction

The Gospel of John chapter 13:1-17 recounts a profound moment in the ministry of Jesus Christ, where He washes the feet of His

disciples. This act of humility and servitude contrasts starkly with the conventional expectations of leadership, particularly in contexts where authority is equated with power and dominance. In many ways, the

foot-washing narrative reflects Jesus' teaching on servant-leadership, which challenges the prevailing notions of leadership both in the ancient world and in contemporary contexts. This passage has been a focal point for discussions on Christian leadership models, especially in juxtaposition with secular models of power and governance (Brown, 2015).

The Nigerian political landscape is marked by systemic corruption, ethnocentric politics, and a general disconnect between political leaders and the masses. Many political leaders in Nigeria, rather than embodying servant-leadership, often engage in what scholars have described as "neo-patrimonialism" (van de Walle, 2007). This model of leadership, prevalent in post-colonial African states, combines personal rule with patronage systems that prioritize loyalty to individual leaders over institutions, justice, and the common good. These patterns have resulted in an entrenched system of "godfatherism," where political elites exercise control over public office bearers through coercive and transactional means (Omotola, 2007).

Reading John 13:1-17 against this background, this study proposes that the Nigerian political class can draw significant lessons from Jesus' model of leadership.

Jesus' decision to take on the role of a servant, washing the feet of His disciples, an act usually reserved for the lowliest of servants, stands as a sharp critique of leadership models based on power, hierarchy, and self-interest. As argued by Köstenberger (2004), this moment in the Gospel not only reinforces Christ's role as a humble leader but also sets a moral and ethical precedent for His followers, particularly those in positions of power.

Political leadership in Nigeria, as in many parts of the world, has often ignored such ethical principles in favour of self-enrichment and personal aggrandizement. Scholars such as Achebe (1983) and Ake (1996) have consistently critiqued Nigerian politics for its focus on material gain rather than service to the people. Achebe (1983) famously argued that Nigeria's problem is primarily a failure of leadership, where leaders, rather than engaging in selfless service, prioritize their interests above the needs of the nation. This "failure of leadership" has contributed to a culture of impunity, weak institutions, and widespread poverty, despite the nation's abundant resources.

By re-examining John 13:1-17 within this socio-political context, this article contends that the Nigerian political leadership could

benefit from adopting a more servant-oriented approach to governance. The principles of humility, sacrifice, and service to others, as modeled by Jesus, provide a counter-narrative to the prevailing authoritarian and patrimonial leadership styles that have dominated Nigerian politics. The theological concept of diakonia (service), which underpins the foot-washing episode, emphasizes leadership as a calling to serve the people and promote their welfare rather than dominate and exploit them (Clarke, 2005).

Furthermore, scholars have drawn parallels between Jesus' act of foot-washing and the ancient Jewish tradition of taharah, a ritual purification that symbolized spiritual renewal and cleansing (Dunn, 2003). Within the Nigerian context, political leaders can view this metaphorically as a call to cleanse the political system of corruption and injustice. Such a perspective aligns with African theological discourses on leadership, which emphasize communal well-being, justice, and the moral responsibility of leaders (Gathogo, 2011).

This study argues that by embracing the principles exemplified in John 13:1-17, Nigerian political leaders can reform their leadership practices towards a more people-centered governance model. This will require

not just structural reforms but a fundamental reorientation of leadership ethics, an internal transformation that reflects the virtues of humility, sacrifice, and service that Jesus embodied. By engaging both biblical and socio-political analysis, the article provides a framework for understanding how scriptural teachings can contribute to the reformation of leadership in Nigeria, fostering accountability, justice, and the common good.

### **Contextual Analysis of John 13:1-17**

#### **Historical Context**

John 13:1-17 is part of the larger narrative of the Gospel of John, located in the section often referred to as the Farewell Discourse (John 13-17). This passage describes the washing of the disciples' feet by Jesus at the Last Supper. The scene takes place during the Jewish festival of Passover, which holds immense symbolic value as a celebration of Israel's liberation from Egypt. John's Gospel, however, does not focus on the institution of the Eucharist, as in the Synoptic Gospels, but rather on Jesus' act of service.

The foot-washing is a powerful symbol within the Greco-Roman world. Foot-washing was typically performed by slaves or servants as an act of hospitality, reflecting the extreme social stratification of the time. For

a master or rabbi to wash the feet of his disciples would have been seen as a radical inversion of social norms and a demonstration of humility.

### **Literary Context**

John's Gospel is distinctive in its theological emphasis on the divine identity of Jesus. The first twelve chapters of the Gospel focus on the public ministry of Jesus, often referred to as the Book of Signs (John 1-12). In John 13, the narrative shifts toward the private instruction of the disciples, beginning with the washing of their feet, marking the opening of the Book of Glory (John 13-21), which centers on Jesus' impending crucifixion, resurrection, and glorification.

The prologue to the washing scene (John 13:1-3) prepares the reader by emphasizing that Jesus was fully aware of His divine status: "Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power" (John 13:3). This awareness makes His subsequent act of washing the disciples' feet even more striking, as it illustrates the paradoxical nature of His kingship: power expressed through humble service.

### **Social and Cultural Context**

In the context of first-century Palestine, hierarchical structures governed social

relations, with clear distinctions between the powerful and the lowly. Slavery was a common institution in the Roman Empire, and tasks like foot-washing were reserved for the lowest of servants. Scholars such as Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998) note that social honor and shame were primary cultural values in this context, with honor attached to power, status, and dignity, and shame to lowly service roles.

By washing His disciples' feet, Jesus subverts the expected norms of honor and status. His action could have been shocking to both His contemporaries and His followers. The cultural emphasis on social stratification makes the act of foot-washing a powerful statement on the redefinition of leadership and greatness in the Kingdom of God. As noted by Barrett (1978), this act of humility stands in contrast to the prevailing notions of power and authority in the ancient world, indicating that leadership in Jesus' community is characterized by service, not domination.

### **Theological Analysis of John 13:1-17**

#### **Christology and the Humility of Jesus**

The foot-washing in John 13 offers profound Christological insights. In the broader context of John's Gospel, Jesus is repeatedly presented as the pre-existent Logos (John

1:1), the divine Son who is in intimate communion with the Father. This exalted Christology forms the backdrop to the act of service Jesus performs. His washing of the disciples' feet does not diminish His divinity; rather, it reveals the character of God as one who serves.

### **Eschatological Implications**

The foot-washing points forward to the crucifixion. Jesus' actions here symbolize His ultimate act of service, the laying down of His life for humanity. The Gospel of John repeatedly links Jesus' glorification with His death on the cross (John 12:23-33), making this passage an anticipatory enactment of the service that will be fully realized in His Passion. Theologically, John 13:1-17 embodies a deep eschatological dimension, in which the present reality of humble service points toward the ultimate future consummation of God's Kingdom. The foot-washing anticipates the inversion of worldly power structures that will characterize the Kingdom of God. Jesus' humility and service embody the Kingdom values, where the first will be last and the last will be first (cf. Matthew 19:30).

### **Soteriology: Cleansing and Salvation**

The dialogue between Peter and Jesus in John 13:6-10 introduces a soteriological

dimension to the narrative. When Peter initially refuses to allow Jesus to wash his feet, Jesus responds, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me" (John 13:8). This statement reveals that the washing carries a deeper symbolic meaning, pointing beyond mere physical cleanliness to spiritual cleansing and participation in the salvific work of Christ. Carson (1991) suggests that Jesus' words highlight the necessity of accepting His redemptive work. The washing symbolizes purification from sin, and refusal to be washed by Jesus implies a rejection of His saving mission. This highlights the importance of grace and the need for believers to embrace Jesus' self-giving love as the means of their salvation.

### **Ethical Implication for Discipleship**

The foot-washing scene also carries significant ethical implications for discipleship. After washing the disciples' feet, Jesus declares, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). This call to imitate Jesus' humility and service becomes a foundational ethic for the Christian community. Theologians such as Boff (1985) argues that this passage underscores the radical nature of Christian discipleship, which calls for a reversal of worldly power structures. The disciple is not

called to seek power, prestige, or domination, but to follow the example of Jesus, embracing service and humility as the core of their life and witness.

### **Ecclesiology: A Model for the Church**

The foot-washing narrative also holds ecclesiological significance. It offers a model for how leadership and authority are to be exercised within the Christian community. In washing His disciples' feet, Jesus provides an example of leadership that is rooted in service, setting a pattern for future leaders of the church. As O'Day (2006) notes, John 13 challenges hierarchical conceptions of church leadership, advocating instead for a community marked by mutual love and service. This passage has been highly influential in shaping various Christian traditions' understanding of leadership, especially in traditions that emphasize servanthood as a key aspect of ministry. The servant-leadership model, as articulated in John 13, has become a guiding principle for leaders within the church, calling them to lead through service, humility, and sacrifice rather than through coercive power.

### **Conceptual Framework of Servant Leadership**

The concept of servant leadership, as popularized by Greenleaf (1970) in his essay

The Servant as Leader, presents a leadership model that challenges traditional hierarchical structures. Servant leadership is rooted in the belief that leaders should prioritize the needs of others, fostering environments where personal growth, ethical behavior, and community well-being are paramount. Rather than focusing on power, authority, or control, servant leaders seek to empower others through humility, service, and moral integrity. This framework redefines leadership as fundamentally about serving others before self-interest.

In theological and philosophical traditions, the idea of servant leadership is not new. Various religious and cultural frameworks have extolled the virtues of humility, compassion, and service. Jesus Christ's act of washing His disciples' feet (John 13:1-17) is perhaps one of the most cited scriptural examples of servant leadership, symbolizing a radical departure from conventional authority figures. Servant leadership has also found modern applications in business, politics, education, and community leadership, emphasizing an alternative approach to power and influence.

Larry Spears (1995), one of the foremost scholars on servant leadership, identifies ten key characteristics of a servant leader:

1. **Listening:** A deep commitment to listening to others, understanding their perspectives, and responding empathetically.
2. **Empathy:** The ability to understand and empathize with the needs and feelings of others.
3. **Healing:** Recognizing and helping others overcome personal and organizational challenges.
4. **Awareness:** A strong sense of self-awareness and general awareness of the environment.
5. **Persuasion:** The ability to influence others through persuasion rather than coercion.
6. **Conceptualization:** The ability to envision long-term goals and think beyond day-to-day operations.
7. **Foresight:** The ability to anticipate and prepare for future challenges.
8. **Stewardship:** A sense of responsibility for the greater good of the organization and society.
9. **Commitment to the Growth of People:** A genuine desire to foster the personal and professional growth of individuals within the organization.

10. **Building Community:** The recognition that leadership is about creating a sense of community and belonging among followers.

### **The Nigerian Political Landscape: A Crisis of Leadership**

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country and largest economy, is endowed with abundant natural resources, a vibrant culture, and a diverse population. Yet, it has consistently grappled with leadership crises that have stunted its development and undermined the potential of its democracy. The Nigerian political landscape is shaped by authoritarianism, corruption, godfatherism, and a severe lack of accountability, all of which have contributed to a governance structure that often prioritizes the interests of the political elite over the well-being of the general populace. This section delves into the structural and dynamic challenges that define political leadership in Nigeria, while underscoring the urgent need for a transformation of leadership rooted in service rather than exploitation.

### **Authoritarianism in Nigerian Politics**

One of the defining characteristics of Nigeria's political landscape is the prevalence of authoritarian leadership styles. Though Nigeria has been a democratic state

since 1999, many of its leaders exhibit authoritarian tendencies, often drawing from the military legacy of leadership in the country. Nigeria's political history is replete with military coups and regimes that have influenced its political culture. Scholars like Oyeade (2008) argues that authoritarianism persists in Nigerian politics, with elected leaders exercising excessive control over political processes, suppressing dissent, and curtailing political freedoms. This authoritarian impulse often manifests through the use of state security forces to silence opposition, manipulate elections, and restrict civil liberties.

The entrenchment of authoritarian practices in Nigeria's political system has made it difficult for true democratic governance to take root. Despite the existence of democratic institutions, political leaders have often employed these institutions as instruments of control rather than vehicles for participatory governance. As Ibrahim (2007) suggests, Nigeria's leaders frequently exhibit a patrimonial style of leadership, in which power is personalized and decisions are made based on loyalty to individuals rather than institutional norms or democratic principles.

### **Corruption as a Systemic Issue**

Corruption is perhaps the most pervasive and destructive issue facing Nigeria's political leadership. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (2023), Nigeria consistently ranks among the most corrupt countries in the world. Corruption in Nigeria takes various forms, including embezzlement of public funds, bribery, nepotism, and the manipulation of electoral processes. Scholars like Diamond (1988) have long identified corruption as a major impediment to Nigeria's development, with political leaders using their positions to enrich themselves at the expense of the public. The looting of public funds has had a devastating impact on Nigeria's infrastructure, social services, and economic development. Funds that should have been invested in education, healthcare, and infrastructure are often diverted into private accounts or used to maintain the political machinery of patronage. Lewis (2006) describes Nigeria's political economy as one in which the state is often viewed as a source of personal enrichment for those in power. This has created a culture of impunity, where political leaders are rarely held accountable for corrupt practices, further entrenching corruption within the political system.



### **Godfatherism and Patronage Networks**

A significant feature of Nigerian politics is the phenomenon of godfatherism, in which powerful political figures (godfathers) sponsor and manipulate candidates for political office in exchange for loyalty and access to state resources. Godfatherism is deeply rooted in Nigeria's political culture and is particularly prevalent at the state and local levels, where godfathers wield significant influence over political appointments and decision-making processes.

Godfathers often operate as shadowy figures who control political officeholders and use them to further their personal and economic interests. As noted by scholars such as Adebani and Obadare (2010), godfatherism distorts democratic processes by allowing a small elite to dictate the outcomes of elections and governance decisions. This system of patronage undermines the ability of elected officials to act independently or in the best interests of their constituents. Instead, they remain beholden to the godfathers who facilitated their rise to power.

Godfatherism not only stifles democracy but also perpetuates the cycle of corruption, as political officeholders often engage in corrupt practices to repay their sponsors or

maintain their positions of power. The godfather-godson relationship has created a rent-seeking political system that prioritizes personal enrichment over public service, further deepening the crisis of leadership in Nigeria.

### **Lack of Accountability in Governance**

A major consequence of Nigeria's leadership crisis is the pervasive lack of accountability in governance. Leaders at various levels of government frequently operate with impunity, with few mechanisms in place to check their actions or hold them accountable for mismanagement, corruption, or abuse of power. Institutions such as the judiciary, anti-corruption agencies, and legislative bodies are often weak or compromised, limiting their effectiveness in curbing abuses by political leaders.

Olowu and Erero (1997) argue that the weakness of Nigeria's institutions is a deliberate strategy by political elites to maintain control and avoid scrutiny. The lack of strong institutions capable of enforcing accountability has allowed leaders to engage in corrupt practices without fear of repercussions. For example, despite numerous allegations and investigations of corruption against high-ranking officials, very few have been successfully prosecuted

or held responsible for their actions. This culture of impunity has fostered a sense of resignation among the populace, who often feel powerless to challenge the entrenched political elite.

### **Power and the Disregard for the Public Good**

Power in Nigerian politics is often wielded not as a means of advancing the public good, but as a tool for personal gain and political survival. This is evident in the way political leaders manipulate state resources, elections, and public institutions to maintain their grip on power. As Suberu (2013) notes, Nigeria's political system is characterized by a "winner-takes-all" mentality, where political office is viewed as an opportunity to amass wealth and consolidate power.

This dynamic has resulted in a governance structure that prioritizes the interests of the political elite over the needs of the general populace. Public resources are frequently mismanaged, and policies that could benefit the broader population are neglected in favour of projects that serve the interests of a few powerful individuals. This disregard for the public good has exacerbated poverty, inequality, and social unrest in the country.

### **The Nigerian Political Reality: Concentration of Power and Marginalization**

Contrary to the servant-leadership model exemplified by Jesus in John 13, Nigerian political governance has been characterized by the concentration of power in the hands of a few elites. Leaders frequently prioritize personal gain over the welfare of the populace, perpetuating a system of patronage, corruption, and authoritarianism. This concentration of power is evident in the dominance of political godfathers, who control the political system and determine who holds office, often at the expense of democratic processes and the will of the people (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2010).

As noted by Agbaje and Adejumbi (2006), Nigerian politics is structured around the pursuit of power for personal enrichment rather than public service. This power dynamic has led to widespread marginalization of the masses, as political leaders manipulate state resources for their own benefit, while neglecting the needs of ordinary citizens. Basic public services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructural development are often underfunded, while political leaders divert resources to maintain their positions of influence (Lewis, 2006).

The marginalization of the Nigerian populace can be likened to the social exclusion that existed during Jesus' time, where power was concentrated in the hands of religious and political elites who oppressed the vulnerable. Jesus' act of washing His disciples' feet stands in direct opposition to such a system, as it demonstrates that true leadership involves elevating and serving those who are marginalized. This principle is highly relevant to Nigeria's political situation, where leaders often exploit the marginalized for political gain.

### **Servant Leadership as a Model for Nigerian Governance**

In contrast to the prevailing political practices in Nigeria, the servant-leadership model demonstrated by Jesus in John 13 offers a transformative vision for governance. This model calls for leaders who prioritize the well-being of the people over their own personal interests, and who are willing to sacrifice for the greater good. As Greenleaf (1970) articulated in his seminal work on servant leadership, the primary role of a servant leader is to meet the needs of others, especially those who are marginalized or disenfranchised. In the Nigerian context, this means leaders should focus on addressing the pressing needs of the people, such as poverty, inequality, and lack of

access to basic services, rather than concentrating on self-enrichment.

Scholars such as Ebener and O'Connell (2010) argue that servant leadership is especially suited for contexts marked by inequality and corruption, as it promotes ethical behavior and social justice. For Nigeria, the adoption of servant leadership principles could help combat the culture of impunity that allows corruption to thrive. By emphasizing accountability, transparency, and a commitment to the common good, servant leadership could foster a political environment in which leaders are held accountable to the people they serve.

The foot-washing episode in John 13 also challenges Nigerian political leaders to embody humility in their exercise of power. As Jesus, who held the highest authority, humbled Himself to perform the lowliest of tasks, so too should Nigerian leaders practice humility in their governance. This means recognizing that leadership is not about domination or control, but about serving the needs of the people. As Second Vatican Council (1964) teaches in the context of the Catholic Church, true authority is always exercised as a form of service. Nigerian political leaders could learn from this principle, as it encourages them to shift away

from the authoritarianism and egoism that have plagued the country's political system.

### **Foot-Washing and Social Justice: Implications for Nigerian Governance**

Jesus' act of foot-washing not only exemplifies humility but also serves as a metaphor for social justice. By washing the feet of His disciples, including Judas, who would betray Him, Jesus demonstrates that servant leadership extends even to those who may be considered enemies. This is an important lesson for Nigerian political leaders, who often govern in ways that deepen social divisions and perpetuate conflict. The ethic of servanthood calls for leadership that is inclusive and reconciliatory, promoting peace and justice for all members of society, regardless of political, ethnic, or religious affiliation (Brown, 2009).

In the context of Nigerian governance, this means that leaders must work to bridge the divides that have historically separated different ethnic and religious groups, and to ensure that all citizens have equal access to the benefits of governance. The practice of servant leadership could help foster a culture of social justice in Nigeria, where leaders prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable members of society and work to eliminate

systemic inequalities. As Greenleaf (1970) notes, servant leadership is fundamentally concerned with creating a more just and equitable society, in which power is used not for personal gain but for the common good.

### **Reimagining Nigerian Leadership through Servanthood**

As Nigeria grapples with a complex array of political and socio-economic challenges, there is a pressing need for a transformative shift in leadership paradigms. The current landscape, marked by power struggles, corruption, and inefficiency, underscores the urgent need for a reimagined approach to governance. This conclusion synthesizes the key arguments presented throughout the study, advocating for a paradigm shift towards servant leadership. It emphasizes how embracing humility, service, and sacrifice as foundational principles of governance can offer a transformative solution to Nigeria's political woes.

### **Summary of Key Arguments**

#### **1. Contrasting Leadership Models:**

This article has explored the significant contrast between traditional power-centric models of leadership and the servant leadership model exemplified by Jesus Christ in John 13:1-17. Traditional Nigerian

political leadership is often characterized by the concentration of power, corruption, and self-serving practices (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2010). In stark contrast, the servant leadership model, as demonstrated by Jesus' act of washing His disciples' feet, promotes humility, accountability, and a commitment to serving others above self-interest (Köstenberger, 2004).

## 2. **Theological and Ethical Foundations:**

The theological and ethical foundations of servant leadership, rooted in Christian teachings, offer a compelling alternative to the prevailing political norms in Nigeria. The values of humility, service, and integrity central to Christian ethics provide a moral framework for leadership that prioritizes the welfare of the people (O'Day, 2015). This model stands in opposition to the exploitative and authoritarian practices observed in Nigerian governance, where leaders often prioritize personal gain over public service.

## 3. **Role of Religious Institutions:**

Religious institutions and leaders in Nigeria hold significant potential for

influencing political leadership. Churches and religious organizations can advocate for ethical governance, mobilize public opinion, and provide moral guidance to political leaders. By promoting the principles of servant leadership, religious institutions can play a crucial role in fostering a culture of accountability and integrity within Nigerian politics (Adeleke, 2012; Ojo, 2010).

## 4. **Challenges and Opportunities:**

The study acknowledges the challenges associated with integrating Christian values into Nigerian political leadership, including religious pluralism, potential political manipulation, and the need for cultural sensitivity (Ekechi, 1995; Ibrahim & Adu, 2017). However, these challenges also present opportunities for creating a more inclusive and ethical political system. By addressing these challenges thoughtfully, Nigerian leaders can leverage religious values to enhance governance practices and promote social justice.

## Reimagining Leadership

To address Nigeria's political crises effectively, a reimagining of leadership through the lens of servanthood is essential. This reimagined leadership paradigm involves several key elements:

- **Humility and Service:** At the core of servant leadership is the principle of humility. Leaders should approach their roles with a mindset of service, prioritizing the needs of the populace over personal ambitions. This approach fosters trust and cooperation between leaders and citizens, enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of governance (Greenleaf, 1970).
- **Accountability and Integrity:** Servant leadership emphasizes the importance of accountability and integrity. Political leaders who embrace these values are more likely to act transparently, adhere to ethical standards, and resist corrupt practices. This shift towards accountability can help rebuild public trust and improve governance outcomes (Smith, 2007).
- **Commitment to Public Welfare:** A servant-oriented leadership model

requires a deep commitment to addressing the needs of the most vulnerable members of society. This includes prioritizing investments in essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure, and ensuring that resources are allocated fairly and effectively (Ebener & O'Connell, 2010).

## Call to Action

The transformation of Nigerian governance through servanthood requires a concerted effort from various stakeholders, including political leaders, religious institutions, and civil society. The following actions are recommended:

- **Advocacy and Reform:** Religious leaders and institutions should actively advocate for political reforms that align with the principles of servant leadership. This includes promoting policies that enhance transparency, accountability, and public service.
- **Leadership Development:** Investing in leadership development programs that emphasize the values of humility, service, and ethical governance is crucial. Training future leaders in these principles can help foster a new

generation of political figures committed to serving the public good.

- **Public Engagement:** Citizens should engage with political processes and hold leaders accountable to the values of servant leadership. Active civic participation and advocacy can drive demand for more ethical and responsive governance.

## Conclusion

Political practices in Nigeria highlights the urgent need for a transformation in the country's leadership culture. Nigerian political leaders must move away from the concentration of power and the marginalization of the masses, and instead embrace a model of leadership that prioritizes humility, public service, and social justice. The foot-washing episode in John 13 provides a compelling example of what this type of leadership looks like in practice: it is leadership that serves others, elevates the marginalized, and seeks to promote the well-being of the entire community.

As Nigeria continues to grapple with the challenges of governance, corruption, and social inequality, the servant-leadership model offers a path forward, a path that is rooted in the ethics of humility, service, and justice. By adopting this model, Nigerian

leaders can begin to address the deep-seated issues that have plagued the country for decades and work towards creating a more just and equitable society. The reimagining of Nigerian leadership through the principles of servant leadership presents a transformative opportunity for addressing the deep-seated challenges facing the country.

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