

**St. Basil the Great  
(329-379)**

If anyone claims to be able to be completely self-sufficient, to be capable of reaching perfection without anyone else's help, to succeed in plumbing the depths of Scripture entirely unaided, he is behaving just like someone trying to practice the trade of a carpenter without touching wood. The Apostle would say to such: 'It is not the hearers of the Law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the Law who will be justified. [Rom. 2:13]

Our Lord, in loving each human being right to the end, did not limit himself to teaching us in words. In order to give us an exact and telling example of humility in the perfection of love, he put on an apron and washed the disciples' feet.

So what about you, being entirely on your own? Whose feet will you wash? Whom will you follow to take the lowest place in humility? To whom will you offer brotherly service? How, as a solitary, can you taste the joy that is evident where many live together?

The spiritual field of battle, the sure way of inner advancement, continual practice in the keeping of the commandments, this is what you will find in a community. It has the glory of God as its aim, in accordance with the word of the Lord Jesus: 'Let your light so shine before your fellows that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.' [Matt. 5:16]

What is more, community preserves that particular characteristic of the saints which is referred to in the Scriptures thus: 'All who believed were together and had all things in common.' [Acts 2:44] 'The company of those who believed were of one heart and soul and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common?' [Acts 4:32]

*The Greater Rules, 7 (PG31, 933)*