



SEQUIM COMMUNITY CHURCH
WOMEN OF THE BIBLE
February 14, 2017

Ruth and Naomi

ENJOYING AND SHARING GOD'S BLESSINGS

Ruth and Naomi were two women thrown together in the midst of difficult times. Upon the death of her husband and two sons, one married to Ruth, Naomi...an Israelite living in Moab... decided to return to her homeland to live out her final years. Ruth and her sister Orpah offered to accompany Naomi home but she knew she had no future to offer them, so she urged them to remain in Moab with their own people. Only Ruth chose to accompany Naomi to Judah; a very self-sacrificing decision. In Judah the two women struggled to survive---until they met Boaz, a wealthy relative of Naomi's late husband. In keeping with ancient tradition, Boaz agreed to buy the land that belonged to Naomi. As part of the transaction he also agreed to marry Ruth...who had made quite an impression on the old man...which continued Naomi's family line. Among the descendants of Ruth and Boaz was the Messiah.

Read Ruth 1-4

Small Group Opener:

Share a time when a friendship began with someone in the midst of some adversity? _____

MAIN BIBLE STUDY:

Please read the verses and answer the following questions.

1. Prior to her meeting Boaz, how was Ruth a "fitting picture of an unchurched person? _____

2. As a Moabite woman, how might Ruth initially have been perceived by the Israelite family of Elimelech and Naomi? _____
3. Look up Ruth 1:1-5, what about Naomi's life before she decided to return to Israel from Moab stands out to you? _____

4. Naomi makes a "declaration" to both Orpah and Ruth in Ruth 1:8-14. What was the difference in their response? _____

- How do you believe you would have responded to Naomi? _____

5. Read Ruth 1:15, in what way might Naomi have been testing the faith of Ruth in pointing out that Orpah had returned to worship the Moabite gods? _____

6. Boaz demonstrates a "God-like" quality of kindness in Ruth 2. What does Boaz say about Ruth and her kindness in Ruth 3:10? _____

- Given Ruth's attitude and actions towards Boaz, would you agree that she exemplifies the woman described in Proverbs 31:26? _____

- What are we as Christian women to do, according to Colossians 3:12? _____

7. Now re-read Ruth 3:1-5 & 16-18. It is clear that Naomi wants only the best for Ruth. What is Naomi's council to Ruth? _____

- What was the result, according to Ruth 4? _____

8. In what ways should we be like Naomi in our loving service to others? _____

9. In what ways should we be like Ruth in our appreciation and thanksgiving to the Lord? _____

Going Further - Additional Study

1. Re-read Ruth 1:1-5. What emotions might these women have felt as they dealt with famine and the sudden deaths of their spouses, and in Naomi's case her husband and only sons? _____

• In what ways and over what were they likely to be grieving? _____

• Describe a time when you or someone you know experienced a situation in which a sequence of negative events led to the "brink of ruin"? _____

2. Have you or someone you know ever perceived negative circumstances as the Lord's punishment? How does a person determine if he or she is experiencing the consequences of bad choices or sin, or if they are simply experiencing the problems that are common to life in a fallen world? _____

• Words used to describe Naomi are "bitter regret," "remorse," and "anguish." What might a woman do to overcome these deeply wounded emotions? _____

3. Look at the "testimony" of Ruth in Ruth 1:16-17. Which words or phrases seem to have extra meaning to you? _____

• In what ways is Ruth's response a great proclamation of faith in the God of Israel? _____

• What are the hallmarks of loyalty Ruth expressed in her statement? _____

• Why do you think it was important for Naomi to know that Ruth was committed to the God of Israel before Ruth returned with her to Bethlehem? _____

4. Naomi's strategy and plan for Ruth was both bold and very unconventional. If Naomi's plan had become public, the people in the community - certainly the "this is the way we do it around here" leaders - could have been up in arms. Of course, this course of action did not involve any unrighteousness or indecency. Naomi certainly would not have asked Ruth to compromise her virtue or relinquish godly modesty.

- How important was it that Ruth not act on her own, rather take the advice of the older and wiser Naomi? _____

- Often people equate bold and unconventional actions with being "slightly sinful" or ___ being "too aggressive." Why did this particular situation with Boaz seem to call for this kind of methodology? _____

- One more thing to note is that Ruth gleaned in Boaz's fields until the "end of the barley harvest and wheat harvest" (Ruth 2:23). These harvests were weeks apart. How does the passage of time and the precision of timing factor into the bold but virtuous plan that Naomi developed for Ruth? _____
