

Study Series: Ruth

Discussion Questions about the Message of Ruth

1. When her sons died, Naomi believed that God had turned against her and Ruth (chapter 1). Why did she feel so desperate? Have you ever felt this desperate or have you known anyone who felt bitter like Naomi? If so, what caused these feelings and how did you or your friend get through this difficult period?

2. Both of Naomi's daughters-in-law loved her, but they made very different decisions about how to go on with their lives? (1:6-18). What did Orpah do? What did Ruth do? Why do you think Ruth wanted to go with Naomi to Judah?

3. What did Ruth do to help Naomi when they got to Bethlehem in Judah? (2:1-18). What seem to have been the risks for women who did this kind of work? How could the fact that Ruth was a foreigner (from Moab) have made the situation even more difficult? Are there people with different cultural or religious backgrounds living in your community? If so, how are they treated? What can you do to make them feel more accepted?

4. The field in which Ruth chooses to work belongs to a rich and important man named Boaz (2: 3-23). What kind of person does he seem to be? How does he treat Ruth? The Law of Moses required faithful Jews to allow foreigners and widows to pick up stalks of grain after a field was harvested. In what way did Boaz do more than what the law required? What can you learn from Boaz's actions?

5. In chapter 3, Naomi helps Ruth to find a husband. Why do you think she felt this was an important thing to do?

6. Why do you think Boaz was so impressed with Ruth? (3: 10) What prevented him from offering to marry her right away? (3: 12, 13). What did Boaz do to solve this problem? (4: 1-8). How did this help Naomi as well as Ruth? (4: 9, 10).

7. How would you describe the mood at the end of the story? How are Naomi's feelings after the birth of her grandson (4: 14-17) different from her feelings at the end of chapter one? How does she show her gratitude? How did Naomi's grandson, Obed, become a blessing for all the people of Israel?

8. How would you describe the book of Ruth as challenging the traditional beliefs among many of the Jews of post-exilic Israel? What surprise ending does the book have for them?