

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 4th October 2015

HEROINES OF THE FAITH - RUTH (Commitment to God)

As We Gather

The events recorded in the Book of Ruth occurred during the period of the Judges – between about 1150 - 1100 BC.

The Israelite Elimelech, moved his family from Bethlehem in Judah into the country of Moab (descendants of Lot the nephew of Abraham), during a period of prolonged drought in the land [Ruth 1:1-2].

There, after his death, his two sons married Moabite women - Orpah and Ruth.

When her sons also died, Naomi decided to return to her hometown – having heard that the drought had broken. She must have hoped that one of her husband's kinsmen would redeem her husband's bonded property, marry her, and thus give her a home [Ruth 3:12-13 and 4:1-11].

Ruth loved her mother-in-law who was a sincere and believing woman. Naomi's life in a pagan country must have been a powerful witness to the reality of God, for Ruth begged to stay with her wherever she went and whatever happened [Ruth 1:16-17].

The priests of Moab were powerful and cruel, and brought young girls into the temple as priestesses to the fertility goddess. The Moabites believed that the fertility of the fields and farms depended on the sex orgies held in the temple.

The most feared of all the gods was Moloch, to whom children, especially firstborn sons, were sacrificed by fire when disaster such as plague, famine, war, threatened.

Reading Scripture RUTH 1 - 4

Thinking together

There are five main themes running through the Book of Ruth

- Faithfulness

If you had been Elimelech or a member of his family, could you have stayed faithful to God in a land such as Moab? Discuss

How much did Ruth's faithfulness to Naomi have to do with her heart hungry search for God? Discuss

How can we express God's faithfulness in our relationships? Discuss

- Kindness

How did Ruth show kindness to Naomi? Discuss

How did God show kindness to Ruth and Naomi? Discuss

How did Christ show kindness to us? Discuss

- Integrity

How did Ruth show integrity in Bethlehem? Discuss

How did Boaz show integrity in his dealings with Ruth? Discuss

How should our lives reflect our integrity? Discuss

- Protection

How does the story of Ruth reflect God's protection? Discuss

How does God show you His protection? Discuss

- Blessing

What blessing(s) did God bring into Ruth's life / relationships? Discuss

What blessings has God brought into your life / relationships? Discuss

In Closing

Ruth's life was guided by faithfulness towards God, which showed in her loyal and loving relationships with the people known to her.

The values by which she lived in Bethlehem were in sharp contrast to the culture portrayed by many people in the time of the Judges.

Do your life and relationships reflect the contrast between the old and the new you?

