

## Ruth 1:1-18

The book of Ruth is at its root a book about relationships. It is about faithful relationships between people and, in the end, God's faithfulness to them. It is also about people of other cultures coming into Judean culture, and how they may be engaged in relationship as well. (*Ruth and Esther*, Katrina J.A. Larkin, 1996, Sheffield Academic Press: Sheffield, England)

Questions for reflection:

a. Was Ruth's declaration a spontaneous, "spur of the moment" decision or do you think that she thought about and considered the ramifications of her decision ahead of time? What do you think was the role (if any) of Naomi's past actions and life witness/example in this decision? How do you think Naomi demonstrated faithfulness through her life in Moab?

b. Imagine yourself to be Ruth. What thoughts and feelings are you experiencing as you decide to stay with Naomi or to return to your people?

1. What reasons would draw you to return to your people?
2. What reasons would draw you to go with Naomi?
3. Are any of your answers to either question related to fear?
4. Which do you think would win out in your case?

c. "The choice to remain faithful always includes a risk." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why? Just in the offering to accompany Naomi, was Ruth taking a risk? Could Naomi in her bitterness and sense of oppression have refused Ruth's offer? Why or why not? In what respect did Naomi take a risk in relationship with Ruth?

d. Faithfulness for Ruth included taking a risk. Risks are not all big. We take risks every day without realizing it. Think of a risk you have taken. (It could have been as simple as offering to assist someone, or even smiling at someone. They could respond by refusing your help or by meeting your smile with a frown.) How did you decide to take a risk, or did it just happen? Did you have someone else you were "doing it for" or "doing it with?" What thoughts and feelings did you have about it? How did it work out?

e. What opportunities for faithfulness and risk are you facing now individually, as a family and as a church family? How does the fact that other people are impacted by this risk affect the way you think about it? What fears are influencing your thinking? In what ways would you like to be shown faithfulness by those around you? In what way do you feel able to offer faithfulness as a response to someone else?

**THIS STUDY IS TO BE ONGOING FOR 4 WEEKS STARTING NEXT WEDNESDAY NIGHT AT 7:00. WHY NOT COME AND INVITE A FRIEND? Dessert and coffee/beverage included.**