

SMALL GROUP SERMON STUDY

Leader's Guide

July 19-20, 2008

Friendship When I Have Suffered Loss Book of Ruth

The Big Idea

God uses people to reach people, so having a friend during tragic times is invaluable. Dealing with the loss of loved ones is one of the most difficult times life can throw at us. A selfless, faithful friend committed to being there through these times, especially when we wrestle with God over it, is someone each of us desires, and it should also be our desire to become a friend like this.

The Background

Though some characterize the book of Ruth as merely a love story between Ruth and Boaz, it is an incredible story of God's lovingkindness, His commitment and faithfulness, to His people. As the story unfolds, we see how God's people take care of one another through difficult times by their acts of lovingkindness toward one another, which spring from their love of God. Ruth is the first character in the story to demonstrate this kind of love. Later, Naomi returns this kind of love. Finally, Boaz makes costly decisions to show this same kind of love to Naomi and then Ruth.

For Discussion

1. How do people apart from Christ cope and grieve the loss of a loved one?
2. When trying to comfort someone who has suffered loss, what words or actions are appropriate? Encouraging? Inappropriate?
3. Read Ruth 1 as a group.
 - a. Who does Naomi blame for her losses?
 - b. How does loving others demonstrate our love for God? (See Mt. 22:37-40)
4. Do you have or have you had a friend like Ruth?
5. Is there someone in your life that needs a friend like Ruth? What things can you do to become a "Ruth-like" friend to this person?
6. What do these passages contribute to the discussion about commitment, faithfulness, companionship, and love for others?
 - a. Mt. 7:12; Mt. 10:39; Jn. 13:35; Heb. 6:10
7. What kind of picture does the story in the book of Ruth paint for what the Church, the body of Christ, should look like?
8. What things can your group do to not only care for one another in this way, but for those who are part of the Crossroads' body of believers?
9. During the message this week, what other insights did you write about that the group has not discussed tonight? What questions did you have that have not been answered? Ask the group to brainstorm possible answers.