

## Family As Community

### God's Word:

Ruth 1:1-9, 14-16

### Key Verse:

“But Ruth said, ‘Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.’”

Ruth 1:16

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### Breaking It Down:

The beginning of the book of Ruth tells of a man named Elimelech, from Bethlehem in Judah. There was a famine in the land, so Elimelech took his wife, Naomi, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, and moved to Moab. The Bible doesn't give details as to exactly when, but Elimelech died soon after the move. Mahlon and Chilion married Moabite women by the names of Orpah and Ruth. They lived in Moab for about 10 years. Mahlon and Chilion also died, leaving Naomi with her two daughters-in-law.

When Naomi heard that the Lord had come to the aid of His people, she and her two daughters-in-law prepared their things to move back to Bethlehem. While they were on their way, Naomi told Orpah and Ruth to return to their mother's home. Naomi didn't have anything left to offer them so they should try to start new families. After some weeping and crying Orpah decided to return home, but Ruth refused to leave Naomi. “Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God,” Ruth said. (Ruth 1:16)



Ruth decided to stay by Naomi's side and be loyal to her. Ruth demonstrated the truth that participation in the family of God is not based on birth or nationality but on faith in, and obedience to God. (NIV Archaeological Study Bible, p.387)

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### **Living It:**

I can relate to how Ruth felt when she joined her husband's family. Not only did she become a part of his physical family, but she became part of his spiritual family as well, being shown a new religion, beliefs, customs and traditions with which she was unfamiliar. If she had not learned these things, why would she want to stay by Naomi's side and follow her God and people? Ruth gave up her family and the gods and surroundings that she knew to be with Naomi.



When I first entered the church, I was welcomed as a church family member. I was shown new a new religion, beliefs, customs and traditions that I never knew before. Not only did members of the church take time to teach me all of these things, they also made me feel at home to the point that I never felt different, or the oddball.

I think we can learn something from Naomi to remember when visitors come to our church. We should make them feel welcome and part of the church family regardless of their age, race, dress or background. We all know that it is not easy to stop what we are doing and go out of the comfort zone to introduce ourselves to somebody. But, this is part of our job as disciples of Christ, to make our church a family and community of love.

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### **Understanding It:**

1. Where was Elimelech from?
  2. Whose family tree (or lineage) does Ruth belong to?
  3. Do you think you could leave your family to follow your mother-in-law?
  4. Can you remember a time when a visitor came to your church that you went out of your way to welcome him or her?
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## **Doing It!**

The next time a visitor comes to your church, go out of your way to make him feel a part of the church family. Make sure he has everything he needs to be ready to receive whatever the Lord has for him. Maybe, he will remember what you did and return again.

