



## LIFE GROUP NOTES

Week Beginning: 17th December 2023



### The Hands that rocked the cradle-Ruth Dan Fairhead

#### Warm Up

Have you ever been away from home in a strange place only to find yourself lost and struggling to find help? How did it feel? Did you find help? What happened?

#### Background and context

The story of Ruth takes place in the time of the Judges. Naomi, a faithful Jewish woman living outside of Israel, loses her husband and then her sons. She is left distraught and alone in a foreign land with two daughters-in-law. One returns home the other, Ruth, chooses to stay with Naomi and return to Israel. She claims Israel's God as her own and, together with her mother-in-law, sets out to find a husband who will care for her and her mother-in-law and give them a new life. Boaz their relative, steps in and rescues Ruth and Naomi, becoming their redeemer. It is a picture of Christ and the church. Ruth, an ordinary woman, a foreigner to Israel becomes part of Jesus' family tree.

#### Thinking it through: Main discussion/activity



**Read the Book of Ruth.** *What are the surprising things in the passage? What is new? What don't you really understand? This could be a time to discuss and share reflections and ideas on the passage or watch a Bible project type video that helps explain things.*

1. In some ways there is nothing extraordinary about Ruth's story – it includes some of the ups and downs we all experience in life – is there anything you can particularly relate to in her story?
2. Naomi initially felt bitter about what had happened to her whereas Ruth doesn't. How can we avoid bitterness when we face trials?
3. Ruth chose to follow the God of Israel and that meant leaving her home country behind. What sort of things does God call us to leave behind as we follow Jesus?
4. Read Ruth ch 2:11-12. What do Boaz' comments about Ruth tell us about her and why she came to Bethlehem with Naomi?
5. Ruth showed love for Naomi – it was a self sacrificial love, a loyal love. How can we grow in this love for our neighbours?
6. How can we see in Boaz a picture of Jesus as our saviour/redeemer?
7. Naomi's bitterness and tears turn to joy by the end of the story. God promises that He wipes away every tear. Praise God for what He has done and what He will do.

#### Try to leave 15-20 mins to talk about prayer needs of the group and to pray.



We want to encourage the development of prayer, to help everyone grow in confidence in praying. There are many creative ways of praying together: writing prayers, using candles as a focus, reading prayers or praying for each other in pairs.