

## Bearing Christmas

### Small Group Questions: Part 2: What Would Radical Friends Do?

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#### Read

Ruth 1

#### Reflect

When famine strikes Israel, Naomi moves to Moab with her family. But after losing her husband, and then both sons, she decides to return home. With life hard for women, she offers as much freedom to her daughters-in-law as possible. She bids them return to their families. But Ruth vows to go where Naomi goes. She clings to her—even knowing she will be persecuted as a foreigner. How does God use Ruth to show the importance and value of deep-abiding relationships?

Pastor Darrin Patrick describes what radical friends do:

1. Ruth cooperated with God's work in Naomi.
  - a. How did Ruth show her loyalty and friendship to Naomi?
    - i. What did she give up, and what life-changing decision did she make regarding Moabite beliefs?
    - ii. How would you define a true friend?
      1. Who has proven to be a true friend to you? Who have you stuck with through difficult times and how has it shaped your friendship?
2. Naomi entered into Naomi's present pain.
  - a. A wound is a tender place that needs healing, but also a broken place that needs repentance.
    - i. What wounds are you continuing to carry with you, and why?
      1. Write down the name of someone who has betrayed or let you down. How might unforgiveness be creating distance between you and God?
      2. How are your wounds creating distance in your relationships?
  - b. What was Naomi's emotional state when she returned to Israel? What name did she want to be called, and why?
  - c. How willing are you to enter a friend's pain? What excuses do we sometimes use to steer clear of others' pain?
  - d. Ruth lost her husband and was grieving, too. But she still stepped into her mother-in-law's pain. Describe a time you helped someone while you, yourself, were going through a hard time. What impact did it have on you?
3. How has God come into your mess? Have you let him enter your pain? Do you believe God can use you even in the midst of a mess?
4. Ruth inconvenienced herself for Naomi.
  - a. How would Ruth be treated in moving to foreign land?
  - b. How can you extend yourself to a friend in this busy season?
5. Boaz protected Ruth.
  - a. How does Boaz prove to be a true friend to Ruth?
  - b. How does God bless Ruth? How does Ruth's lineage reflect that blessing?
  - c. Have you ever had a friend protect you when you needed it? Explain.

**Respond:** Where is God leading you? How can your small group support you?