

Naomi and Ruth

MEMORY VERSE:

"And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

Ruth 1:16

There was a famine in the land of Israel. There had been no rain, the plants in the fields couldn't grow and the animals and people were very hungry.

A man whose name was Elimelech decided to take his wife Naomi and his two boys on a journey to find a place where there was enough food. Have you ever moved house? It's a big job packing everything! But Naomi and Elimelech probably would only have packed what they could carry and set off on foot, or maybe on camels. It would have been a long journey.

Finally they found food in a country called Moab and settled down to live here. Sadly, Elimelech died shortly afterwards leaving Naomi alone with her two sons. However, she was a brave woman and they continued to live there for the next ten years. During this time, Naomi's sons, Mahlon and Chilion married girls from Moab. They may have stayed in the family home or moved out on their own, we don't know, but sadly once again, both sons died and Naomi was once again left alone with this time, two daughters-in-law.

Naomi must have felt very sad -- she came to Moab with a husband and two sons and now only she was left. She decided to go back to her own homeland as the famine was now over. As she packed up her belongings she must have thought back to the first journey and wondered about making the long journey back all on her own. However, Ruth, one of her daughters-in-law decided to go with her and nothing Naomi could say would change her mind. She was willing to leave everything she knew and her family behind to go with Naomi because she loved her. They set off together.

When they arrived back in Bethlehem, they were very poor. But God had provided a way for poor people to find food. At harvest time, when the farmer would gather in the grain from the field, some of the grain would fall to the ground or be missed during cutting. God made a law that the farmer was to not go over his field again. Some was to be left for poor people to collect so that they could be fed. So Ruth went out everyday to the fields around the town to gather what she could find. But she did it happily and willingly because she loved Naomi and wanted to help her. Fortunately she went to a field which belonged to a man named Boaz who was related to Naomi. He was kind to Ruth and made sure she had enough food to bring back to Naomi.

In time, Boaz married Ruth and they had a little boy. Naomi once again had a family.

Things to Remember

- Ruth left her family, her land, and her religion to go with Naomi and care for her.

- She worked hard in the fields so they would have food to eat.
- She did as Naomi asked and married Boaz.

Discussion

Ruth took her responsibility of daughter-in-law very seriously and went with Naomi to look after and care for her. Older people who have lived longer and experienced so much more deserve respect and honour. Kindness and care of old people and poor people pleases God. Think of any old or poor people that you know. Is there anything you can do to be kind to them?

Why did Naomi leave her homeland?

What happened to Naomi in Moab?

How did God care for Naomi?

Activity Suggestions

Draw a picture of Ruth out gleaning in the fields. If you have some long grass or maybe even a wheat field that grows nearby, perhaps you could pick some and glue it onto your picture.

Cut a sponge into different sized heart shapes. Pour some washable poster paint into a shallow container. Sponge paint a piece of paper with hearts. Let dry and then fold in half and write or draw a message inside to tell an older family member or friend how much you love them.