

Guided Bible Study

**Salendine Nook Baptist Church
Friendship (Growing Side By Side)**

Ruth 1 v. 1 - 2 v. 23

**A modified Version of Scripture Union's
LifeBuilder Bible Study Series originally written by
Carolyn Nystrom**



About These Bible Studies

*For the purposes of our Bible Studies we will be using Scripture Union's LifeBuilder Bible Study Series. Our Theme for these studies is: **Friendship (Growing Side by Side)**. The studies were originally written by Carolyn Nystrom, but we will be modifying them in order that they become more usable for home study as church transitions between the church building and home during the ongoing Pandemic.*

These studies give us the opportunity to study the Bible in a greater depth and to reflect on what it is saying to us – much like we would do in our normal Wednesday Morning Bible Study. To give a sense of group study, it is suggested that you do the study on a Wednesday morning, for an hour, starting at 10.30am. Get yourself a tea or coffee, a Bible, pen and paper (for any notes you want to make) and begin studying.

Hope that you enjoy it!

Pastor Ian

Context

God created us to thrive in one another's presence. Friends help us to mature emotionally and spiritually. Friends love us no matter what. Friends teach us about forgiveness. As we look at these studies together, they introduce us to powerful stories about friendship in the Bible, and how we can apply the principles contained within these stories into our own lives. They also help us to discover the riches of godly friendship – the greatest friendship of them all.

Study 4 -

Naomi

and Ruth

Family as friends? Major contrasts lived out in close quarters can make 'enjoying our differences' a bitter joke. Creating a sense of family is hard. Maintaining it is even harder. Yet many family members, with God's help, overcome incredible odds and, somewhere in adulthood, become friends. Take for example, two women from the ancient past: Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi.

PERSONAL REFLECTION. *Describe one family relationship that you have enjoyed.*

Differences within a family make a rocky road towards friendship, but some have walked it well. **Read Ruth 1 v. 1 - 2 v. 23**

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

- What scenes from this story stand out in your mind?
- What hardships did Ruth and Naomi have to overcome in order to move from a family relationship to a friendship?
- As you study each person's statements about God in the story; how did faith impact the actions of each character?
- What did Ruth do in order to act out the pledge that she made to Naomi in **Ruth 1 v. 16 – 17**?
- At the close of the story, Naomi's friends described Ruth as 'your daughter-in-law who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons' (**Ruth 4 v. 15**). Whose friendship has blessed your life in similar ways?
- In what ways did Boaz show himself as a friend to both Ruth and Naomi in chapter 2?
- In-law relationships are difficult because they combine families with different values, interests and histories. (***Ruth was from the country of Moab, ancient enemies of Naomi's people***). How might family differences also enrich potential friendship? Maybe you could give some examples.
- What's hard about being an in-law? (Consider the roles of parent-in-law, son/daughter-in-law, brother/sister-in-law).
- What do you think it would take to be an in-law who is also a friend?
- Make a list of all your family members. (Include some relatives outside of your immediate family). Who on this list have you learned to appreciate—in spite of their differences from you?
- Which family relationship could be softened by steps towards friendship?

Now or Later

Why not gather together some photos of your family. With each photo of your family before you, pray for that individual family member. Thank God for each member of your family. Allow God to draw your attention to particular needs.

Read Ruth 3 v. 1 – 4 v. 22. Notice the negotiations Boaz made with the men at the town gate (**Ruth 4 v. 1 – 12**). What did he and they do to ensure that friendship among them would continue?

As they moved towards creating a new family, the characters in the book of Ruth lived out their faith in God in practical. Everyday ways. How could you act on your faith in a way that would make you a better present or future family member?



To help you in your study

The purpose of the study is: To allow our faith in God to grow us into people who have the ability to become friends with members of our families.

As you look at the story found in the book of Ruth, you should find a variety of hardships as you survey the story. These include: ***cultural differences*** (Ruth 1 v. 2; 2 v. 10), ***death*** (Ruth 1 v. 3, 5), ***lack of grandchildren*** (Ruth 1 v. 5), ***poverty*** (Ruth 1 v. 6; 2 v. 3), ***bitterness*** (Ruth 1 v. 20), ***danger*** (Ruth 2 v. 9), ***differing homelands*** (Ruth 2 v. 10), ***rival parents*** (Ruth 2 v. 11), ***shared housing*** (Ruth 2 v. 23) and ***unfamiliar customs*** (Ruth 2 v. 2 – 3).

Naomi's references to God occur in **Ruth 1 v. 20 – 21** and **2 v. 20**. Ruth speaks of God in **Ruth 1 v. 16 – 18**. Boaz mentions God in **Ruth 2 v. 4, 12**. Later in the story, the town elders call on God in **Ruth 4 v. 11 – 12**, as do Naomi's friends in **Ruth 4 v. 14 – 15**. As you maybe spot each reference, try and link the beliefs (***implied or stated***) with the actions.

A space for you to takes notes or observations . . .

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