

Discussion Guide

Read the Magnificat in Luke 1:46-5 and reflect on how it relates to the story of Ruth and Naomi.

1. What do you do when what you hoped for has not happened?
2. What do you think about Ruth's unreasonable decision to move to Israel to live and care for Naomi? Has God ever led you to make a decision that would affect your future that was deeper, costlier, and riskier than what is typically seen as the smarter, more reasonable course of action?
3. What hope does it bring you knowing that we do live in a universe where a costly act done in love is not wasted?
4. "Don't call me Naomi," which means pleasant. She told them, "Call me Marah," which means bitter, "Because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me. The Almighty has brought misfortune upon me." Ruth 1:20-21

Have you known anybody like Naomi who, after ten years of her loved ones' passing, is still grieving their loss? What are the effects of grief and what can we do to keep ourselves from getting stuck in it?

5. Comment on this statement: "God prefers an authentic complaint to fake optimism."
6. List the seven hope builders presented in the message. Make comments, share insights, stories or questions raised by each.
7. Share a story, from your life or another's where God did for you or the person what God did for Naomi. She experienced a dramatic reversal of fortune.
8. Hope has its reasons. So does despair. What reasons do people have for despair and what reasons do we have for hope?

9. Share a time where you acted in hope rather than remain in self-pity. You actually took steps that would ultimately lead to your own reversal of fortune.

10. Share a story from your life or history when action was taken that became a lifeline for another, where you or someone in history was a Ruth to another.