



**Life Group Discussion Guide**  
**Ruth: Mercy in the Shadows**  
**God's Mercy in the Midst of our Pain – Ruth 1**

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Main thought:

Pain, grief, and loss can cause us to either run from God or toward God, but regardless of our decision God remains faithful to us.

Principles:

3 kinds of dark days

1. Days that others have made
2. Days that you deserve
3. Days that you create

3 common responses to pressure

1. Go away
2. Give in
3. Give up

Welcome and Fellowship Time (suggested time 10 min)

Open in Prayer

Discussion Starter (suggested sharing time 5-10 min)

- Share a highlight from this last week or weekend.
- Share what resource from God or what characteristic of God that you're in need of as you head in to this new year?

Week in Review (suggested sharing time 5-10 min)

- Who has shared or reminded you of the hope we have in Jesus recently?
- Who has God put in your life to share the Good News with as you head into this new year?

Sermon Review (suggested time 15 min)

Review the passage from Sunday's message and discuss the following questions.

- What stood out to you from this message?
- What do we know about the spiritual and moral condition of God's people during the period of the judges? See Judges 21:25



- When famine hits the land, what do Elimelech and Naomi do?
  - What is so shocking about their decision? See Deut. 23:3-6
  - What is relatable about their decision?
- How do dark days lead to bad decisions, and how do bad decisions lead to darker days in verses 1-13?
- What is remarkable about Ruth's decision to stay with Naomi?
- Naomi returns to Bethlehem very bitter but how do we see God's mercy in the shadows of Naomi's darkest days even when she can't see it?

Application (suggested time 10 minutes)

- What are the dark days you're living through right now? Take a moment to say them out loud and recognize the shared pain and losses in your group. (feel the freedom to stop and pray for each other)
- How are we tempted to run away from God in the midst of our pain rather than run towards God and remain in Him?
- Have you ever felt like Naomi? Do you feel that way now?
  - What comfort and hope do you have knowing that God remains faithful to us, He runs toward us, and with God no one is beyond the point of no return in spite of how far away they seem?
- Ruth chose to follow God and remain faithful to Naomi in the midst of her pain. Is there someone who God has put in your life to be a Ruth to you in the midst of your pain? Are you being called by God to be a Ruth in the life of someone currently?

Spend time gathering prayer requests, praying for each other & praying for application of the study in the lives of the group members. (Suggested time 20 minutes)