What do you consider to be the characteristics of a good friendship?

**Read Ruth 1**

1. God brought two women from entirely different worlds together. What were their similarities? What were their differences? When have you had a friendship with someone very different from you?

2. What did Ruth’s commitment to Naomi, despite the death of her husband, reveal about her character?

3. Has someone ever been that devoted to you? What happened? What did that friendship mean to you?

4. What gets in the way of such committed relationships?

**Read Ruth 2:1-7**

1. What do you admire most about the relationship between Ruth and Naomi?

**Read Ruth 3:1-4**

1. What can you learn about friendship through the relationship between Ruth and Naomi?

2. Do you think the way Christians approach friendships with one another today pleases God? Why or why not? *No. We’re always on guard because of past “church” relationships.*

3. What do you think God intends for us (or expects from us) in our relationships with one another? How are we going to do that today? *We should be there for one another.*

4. What do you have to gain from developing intimate friendships with other women? How would these friendships benefit your church? Your community? *The world?*

5. What habits or attitudes must be overcome so that we can really become better friends with one another?
Brief Summary

- The Book of Ruth is about love, devotion and faithfulness between two women (example that we can have an unconditional relationship with other women)
- Ruth 1:1 starts by telling us that the book was written during the time of an era that was marked by immorality, idolatry and war
- There was famine in the land of Israel (possible punishment for their sins against God) causing Naomi’s husband Elimelech to leave their homeland to travel to a foreign land Moab
  2. Moab was about 30 miles from Bethlehem-Judah and would have been considered a foreign land because it could have taken a long time to travel what we consider a short distance
- It really is considered foreign because they were going to a land that was foreign in worship (they were going from a place that that honored God to another one that was so sinful/heathen in its ways)
- Naomi leaving her native land must have been a sacrifice for her because she was sincere in her faith, loved the people of God, her native land and traditions of her race
- Naomi found herself in a strange land, unknown surroundings, and with all the problems of establishing a home in a repulsive land

1. After residing in Moab for some time nothing but misfortune followed Naomi. Her husband died (he went to a place to escape death from famine and ended up dying anyway)
   - Her sons married Moabite women (against the law for a Jew to marry outside of their nation)
   - Then both her sons die leaving her in a land of idolaters

2. Now old, widowed and helpless with two daughter-in-laws (Ruth/Orpah) Naomi makes the decision to return to her native land
   - She did not just want to return because she was sorrowful of heart but also because she heard the Lord visited his people and had given them bread
   - There she would be able to worship her God

The Relationship Unfolds

- Naomi pleads with them to return to Moab. Naomi knew it would be hard for a Moabite woman to cross over into Canaan and there would be little prospects of them find husbands (remember they were also widows). (Didn’t take much pleading for; She kissed her and went back to her idolatrous people), but Ruth clave (to adhere to; cling or stick) Naomi said please don’t make me go back; your people will be my people; your God my God; where you die I will be buried also.

- Knowing that Naomi was old Ruth knew that she would have to take care of her; would glean (what was left) from the fields of Boaz (kinsman of Naomi’s husband)
• She found favor with Boaz because he had heard how she had taken care of her mother-in-law; left your father/mother and your native land and come to place that you don’t know any of the people

• Naomi told Ruth that she shouldn’t glean from any other field (good advice)

• Naomi advised Ruth in the steps leading to her marriage to Boaz

• Through Naomi’s tender boldness, saw Ruth lifted out of obscurity and poverty into marriage with a godly man, as well as a mighty man of wealth

• Naomi was able to live again in the life of her dear, sacrificial daughter-in-law, and they rejoiced when Ruth’s first child was born Obed (the father of Jesse and Jesse is the father of the great King David)

• The Moabites who left her people for love of Naomi is duly named as an ancestress of the Messiah Himself