



# Ruth

## Session 2: In Case of Emergency

### 1. Background readings / concepts

#### a. *go'el*

Jeremiah 32.6-8; Leviticus 25.25, 48-54; Numbers 35.19-27; and Proverbs 23.11. From these passages, how would you describe the concept of *go'el*?

#### b. *go'el* in Ruth

Ruth 2.20, 3.9, 12, 13; Ruth 3.4; Ruth 3.6; Ruth 3.7, 8, 14, and 4.1. From these passages, how would you describe the concept of *go'el*?

#### c. Widows

Exodus 22.22; Deuteronomy 24.19-21; Psalm 146.9; Isaiah 1.17, Isaiah 4.1; Jeremiah 7.6; Ezekiel 22.7; Malachi 3.5. From these passages, what can you say about the status of widows?

#### d. Levirate marriage

Deuteronomy 25.5-10 ; Genesis 38.  
Look especially at Genesis 38.14-15, where the text is ambiguous. Do you think Tamar intended to be taken for a prostitute or did she just play along with Judah's assumptions?

#### e. *hesed*.

Ruth 1.8, 2.20, and 3.10; Exodus 15.13; Judges 1.24; 2 Samuel 16.17; Job 6.14; Psalm 25.10; Psalm 141.5; Proverbs 20.28; Micah 7.20

f. "feet"

Judges 3.24: Eglon's servants did not disturb him in his chambers because they assumed he must be "covering his feet."

2 Kings 18.27: the people are warned that while under siege they may have to literally "drink the water of their feet."

Deuteronomy 28.57 and Ezekiel 16.24: both use "feet" as a euphemism for female genitals.

How does understanding the euphemism of "uncovering the feet" change your assumptions about reading stories in the Bible?

2. How does knowing the story of Judah and Tamar help you in understanding Ruth's situation?

3. Why are the above concepts and stories important in the telling of Ruth's story?

4. In your experience, who are the vulnerable people in our society who don't have a "safety net?" What go'el equivalents can you identify?

5. What are the implications of this session's material for your personal life? Your spiritual journey? For your local faith community?

