

Church: A New Family

Scripture Reading — Ruth 1:6-18

Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. — Ruth 1:16

In our story for today, Ruth, who married into Naomi's family, pledges to remain with Naomi and to join with her people and worship God. At the end of the book of Ruth, we find Naomi with a grandchild, born to Ruth and a kinsman--redeemer named Boaz, who has married the widow Ruth and taken her mother-in-law Naomi into his household (Ruth 4). Hope is restored to this family through God's provision of extended family members who show his love to one another.

I experienced something like that in a church full of transplants. People from many places became a large extended family to one another. I especially remember a woman named Carol who had no grand-children but became a grand-mother to my own -children.

One purpose of the church is to reshape our understanding of family. Being part of a church family means including people who are not related by blood—except for the blood of Jesus.

The early church quickly became a community in which people relied on one another and even called each other brothers and sisters.

One of the ongoing challenges of being a church family is to understand that our relationships are to be shaped by our relationship with God. God is making us into a family.

Prayer

Father God, help us, your children, to have church families in which we love each other as brothers and sisters in faith. Forgive us when we do not act that way. In the name of our Brother, Jesus, Amen.

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