

## FAMILY LOYALTY



**Aim:** To investigate the role of kinsman-redeemer and reflect how Christ has been that to us

How would you rate your relationship with your extended family? Do you just meet up at weddings and funerals or does your wider family provide a network of support and encouragement? In Old Testament times the kinsman-redeemer played a vital role in protecting and promoting family life. Whether we have a family who supports us like this or not, when we're part of God's family Jesus is always acting on our behalf – he truly is our kinsman-redeemer!

*When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. In the middle of the night something startled the man, and he turned and discovered a woman lying at his feet.*

*'Who are you?' he asked.*

*'I am your servant Ruth,' she said. 'Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer.'*

*'The Lord bless you, my daughter,' he replied. 'This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: you have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all that you ask. All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character. Although it is true that I am near of kin, there is a kinsman-redeemer nearer than I. Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to redeem, good; let him redeem. But if he is not willing, as surely as the Lord lives I will do it. Lie here until morning.'*

**Ruth 3:7-13**

### TO SET THE SCENE

The kinsman-redeemer was essentially the relative who was responsible for rescuing the family out of a difficult situation. Share together examples of when you have been rescued. These could be serious or funny memories, times when you were rescued by a family member or someone else.

### READ RUTH 3:1-18



**1** 'Redeemer' is a key concept in the Book of Ruth. Brainstorm how you would explain it to a non-Christian.



**2** The kinsman-redeemer was responsible for looking after the needy members of the extended family. Look at the following references to find out what his role included:

- ▶ Leviticus 25:25
- ▶ Leviticus 25:47-49
- ▶ Numbers 35:19-21
- ▶ Deuteronomy 25:5-6

**3** In this situation, what did Naomi hope that Boaz would do as the family's kinsman-redeemer?

**4** Look at Ruth 2:12 and 3:9 – how is Boaz going to be the answer to his own prayer?

**5** Boaz knew he was the kinsman-redeemer, so why do you think he didn't act sooner?



**6** The custom of a kinsman-redeemer is an outdated one, but are there any principles we can learn from it about how to look after our families?



**7** How can these principles about looking after our natural families extend to caring for those in the church? Think specifically how your church can become more of an extended family instead of relative strangers who meet once a week.

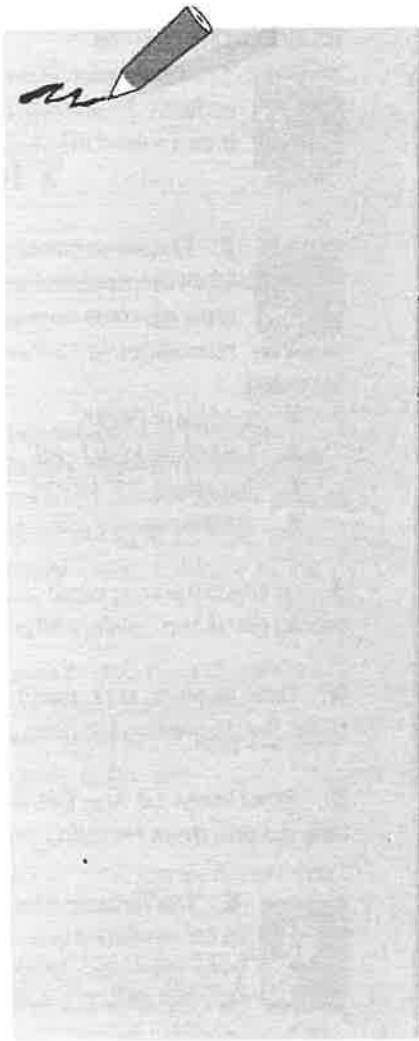
**8** Looking at your answers to question 2, how is Christ our kinsman-redeemer? Look up Psalm 121, Hebrews 13:5, Revelation 19:11.



**9** God calls himself our redeemer. What does this mean for our lives? What has God done for us in this role of redeemer? Look at Exodus 6:6-8, Psalm 103:4, Isaiah 43:1, 44:22-23.

**10** This chapter begins in v1 and ends in v18 speaking about 'rest' (the Hebrew word for 'home' in 3:1 is literally 'rest'). In what sense does finding our Redeemer give us true rest? Look at Psalm 62:1, Romans 5:1, Revelation 14:3.

**11** Why do we as Christians often struggle with the concept of 'rest'? What can we do to combat this? Look at Ephesians 2:10.



## WORSHIP

For the original readers of the Bible the word 'redeemer' would conjure up an image of slaves being 'redeemed' in the marketplace. A ransom was paid to set them free and rescue them from a life of slavery. As New Testament believers, the word creates another image in our minds – bread, wine and a cross. As you think again about the cost of your redemption, share communion together. Use your answers to questions 8 and 9 as starting points for your prayers of thanksgiving and praise.

## FOR NEXT WEEK

God often asks us to be the answer to our own prayers, as Boaz was. Who or what situation are you praying for where you could be part of the answer? Ask God to help you as you give your prayers hands and feet this week.