

Discussion Questions for Judges & Ruth - June 2014

1. Start by asking members of your group to share about a time in their lives when they were especially discouraged, disappointed or depressed (ex, a death in the family, season of poor health, loss of a job, not passing an entrance exam in school, etc). Ask them to share how God helped them through that difficult season. You can come back to this discussion when you get to the book of Ruth.

2. Why do you think it is important for each new generation to see the works of God in their own lives? (2:7-10) compare Gideon's question in 6:13. Ask a few people to share an example of how they have seen God work in their life.

Examples: Answer to prayer / Unexplainable protection / changed people / unexpected provision of a material or financial need

3. Review the "cycles" that are repeated many times through the 400 years of the Judges.

Sin / Servitude / Supplication (call out to God for help) / Salvation (God raises up a Judge) / Silence

4. Ask a few people to share which of the Judges (Deborah, Gideon, Samson) is most familiar and / or most confusing to them. Ask them to explain their answer. You may want to select one of these Judges and review their life and work and look for the cyclical pattern above.

Ch 4-5 - Deborah Ch 6-8 - Gideon Ch 13-16 - Samson

5. In what ways do you think this cyclical pattern in the life of the Israelites is similar or different to the cyclical pattern that is often found in the lives of people who struggle with addictions? (gambling, substance abuse, anger issues, immorality, etc)

How can people find help to break these kind of repeated struggles and addiction?

6. Ask the group to share what they know about the main characters in the book of Ruth:

Why was Naomi bitter and discouraged?

How did Ruth model loyalty to her mother-in-law?

How did Boaz extend love to Ruth?

How did God turn bitterness (ch 1) into blessing (ch 4:13-17)

How can God turn your disappointment into a blessing?

Compare: Matthew 1:5 - are you surprised to see a Moabite woman in the line of Christ?

7. The story of Ruth is a light during 400 years of darkness in Judges.

How can you be a "light" in our world today? (Matthew 5:14-16)

Share something specific that you will do to be a "light" this week.

Be ready to report back to your group next week.