

Naomi feels empty, her life is bitter. She she has nothing left to give and feels that the Lord has turned against her. She has lost her husband, lost her sons and lost the favour of her God. She can only see emptiness in front of her and she does not want to bring Ruth and Orpah into that emptiness. Ruth chooses Naomi and accepts her where she is at, as does the community she returns to and so does God.

When we are experiencing grief/loss or when we have low capacity to do the things we “should” be doing, we can start to believe lies about who we are. That lie could sound like “I don’t want to be a burden to others by inviting them into my grief.” or maybe “I want to do what is normally expected of me”. We hide from others and say “I’m fine” and do our best to prove it to them, to God and to ourselves. But the reality is that it is ok to have more needs and less capacity because then we get to rely on our community and rely on God.

Naomi doesn’t “do” much in this story. She is honest with those around her about her grief. She is also honest with how she feels about God. She is not alone. Naomi accepts Ruth’s commitment to companionship knowing that it will cost Ruth to come. She accepts Ruth’s care of her by letting Ruth provide for their needs through gleaning even though there is risk. She also accepts the blessings of her community who reinterpret the actions of God toward her. Naomi does not bury or swallow her grief and she doesn’t hold onto it; she just feels it and goes through it with others who meet her where she is at.

Today you are invited to learn from Naomi and just be. There is nothing for you to “do” but we hope that during this afternoon you can receive what you need. Take 30 minutes (or longer) and try one of these suggestions that meets a need you have. Also, you can try as many as you want after Ruth Con is over. It is ok (and healthy) to need more than one or to return them.

1. Maybe you need to share honestly with family or friends? Call someone or set up a time when you can have a heart to heart. Just like Naomi we want to invite our community into truly knowing how we are?
2. Maybe you need to have an honest talk with God. Find a spot where you feel safe to open yourself up to hear from God. If you want to do this but don’t know how, you can sign up for prayer ministry and have someone help you get in front of God for that talk.
3. Maybe you need space away from your house? Go on a walk outside and be in creation and be with creation. We are also part of the creation so you can just **be** along with the rest of creation.
4. Maybe you need to receive a gift. Ask someone to buy you a meal. Ask someone take a responsibility you have. Ask someone to pray for you. It is ok to receive from people without feeling guilty to repay them.
5. Maybe you need to sleep. Take a nap in your favorite spot with the best blanket.

Secret option (combination of 2&3). Go on a prayer walk. Open yourself up to hear from God through the world around you. Ask God what he wants to say to you as you watch a family play at the park. How does God see you when you are with your family? Ask God what you can learn from the trees? What similarities do you share with them? Ask God what true about your neighbourhood? How do you fit there? (after asking God a question, take time and listen for an answer)