

Vision & Values Sermon Series

Values: Scripture, Prayer, Generosity, Diversity, **Community**, Creativity, Outreach, Justice, Love.

We Value Prayer: We are committed to being a community where all are welcomed, known and loved.

Texts: Matthew 9:9-13; The Book of Ruth

This morning we talked about the powerful community dynamic in the book of Ruth by considering the various relationship dynamics, with special emphasis on Ruth and Boaz. Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi were part of the most vulnerable in society: widowed and childless women. Boaz exceeds the expectations of the law in his care for them.

Ruth, having already experienced exceptional warmth and welcome from Boaz, risk being truly known and requests Boaz to extend grace and protection to her. He does whole heartedly recognizing that he is the one who experiences Ruth's love (Hebrew: *hesed*). The community joins in celebrating Naomi, Ruth and Boaz's joy.

The calling of Matthew (Matthew 9:9-13) also brings this dynamic to the forefront. Jesus invites Matthew to follow him, but Matthew also invites Jesus into his life world allow Jesus to truly know him.

Questions for discussion:

1. What are your thoughts and feelings regarding the value of community?
2. As you consider the book of Ruth, who do you identify with? Why do you think this is the case?
3. What other lessons about community can we learn from the book of Ruth? What other biblical stories come to mind?
4. Are you currently experience this type of community? At EBC or in a different context in your life?
5. What are ways that EBC can live into the value of community? Who are those around us who need to experience being welcomed, known and loved?