

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

World Mission Sunday 12 November

Migration /məˈɡreɪʃ(ə)n/(noun)

“Movement of people to a new area or country in order to find work or better living conditions.”

Questions for Home Groups

1. What causes people to migrate from one country to another (or within the same country)?
2. What particular kinds of migration have you come across personally?
3. Where in the Bible do we find examples of migration?

Read the following portions from the book of Ruth

1:1-5; 2:1-23

4. What different challenges did Ruth and Naomi face? How are they similar for many migrants today?
5. How did Boaz respond to Ruth's arrival in his fields? How does that compare with different responses to migrants we see today?
6. What should be the Christian response to those challenges? Can you identify key Bible passages which speak to this? What are the reasons given for this response? (See Lev 19:33 & 34 and Eph 2: 12-13).
7. What are the opportunities for Christian response in Oxford? Is there some way I can use my time, skills, prayers or money to serve?
8. Spend time praying for those situations and people you know.

Notes for leaders

1. Push and pull factors can be economic (seeking employment, education), conflict, persecution, ecological (eg water sources).
2. A chance to share personal experience: note that migration may be 'unforced' – people moving legally for employment or education. Many such people could be wealthy and highly skilled. Or they may be particularly vulnerable - refugees fleeing war and seeking asylum. These people also may be highly skilled!
3. Examples include Adam & Eve; the scattering after Babel; Abraham and the patriarchs; the Israelites in Egypt and then wandering in the desert; Ruth and Naomi, the exiles in Babylon and Persia (Jeremiah, Daniel, Esther...); Pentecost; the Ethiopian eunuch; the church scattered after Stephen's martyrdom; Cornelius from Italy stationed in Caesarea; Lydia of Thyatira working in Philippi ...
4. Ruth and Naomi had both suffered deep personal loss but also all means of protection and income. Without husbands they were essentially destitute and without any status. Migrants today may have faced all kinds of trauma and loss. They will likely suffer culture shock/stress and may encounter prejudice. They may need to learn a new language and certainly learn many new systems. All their normal support structures of extended family and friends are not available to them in their new location.
5. Boaz exemplified God's care for the foreigner, contrasting with today's concerns about numbers overwhelming support structures, resentment over perceived threats to services. Best not to get too bogged down here in the politics of different European countries' responses to the migration crisis or of Brexit, though it is relevant!
6. We are commanded to love and care for the stranger/foreigner/alien, to see they are provided for and that they receive justice. We were also foreigners to God, who has given us a home. See in addition Leviticus 19: 10; 23:22; Deut.10:18; 24:14, 17, 19 -21; 27:19; Matt 25: 34 – 40.