READ.
Ruth 2

REFLECT.
In Ruth 2, a social hierarchy exists: Boaz is the rich and powerful guy at the top, and Ruth is way down at the bottom (foreign-born women were often powerless in ancient societies). But the story largely ignores this hierarchy. Ruth is included with the Hebrew women in the gleaning, and Boaz acknowledges that she has done great things in caring for Naomi.

Short-term mission trips present incredible opportunities for you to cross boundaries, meet new people, and step outside your comfort zone as you serve God. However, they can also reveal a damaging hierarchy: at the top is the mission team, which has the resources, and below it is the host community, which needs the resources. That hierarchy isn’t accurate in God’s eyes. God is at work in both the host community and the mission team.

In their book *When Helping Hurts*, Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert acknowledge the temptation for mission teams to believe that they are “above” the people they have come to serve. In response to this attitude, Corbett and Fikkert remind us, “We are not bringing Christ to poor communities. He has been active in these communities since the creation of the world, ‘sustaining them by his powerful word’ (Heb. 1:3). Hence, a significant part of working in poor communities involves discovering and appreciating what God has been doing there for a long time.”

Consider today how God has been at work in your host community since long before you arrived. Consider also how you can follow the example of Ruth and Boaz, acknowledging and affirming the work of God in everyone around you.

PONDER.
1. How have you seen God at work in the people you are serving? (If you’re not yet on your trip, what will you do to be attentive to God at work among them?)

2. What is one thing you can do to make sure you are doing mission with your host community, not just to your host community?

PRAY.