

Does the Bible have examples of same-sex relationships?

There is no doubt at all that the Bible does give us examples of loving relationships between people of the same sex. In the Old Testament there are the relationships between Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:9, 14–17) and David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:1–3, 20:41, 2 Samuel 1:26). In the New Testament there is the relationship between Jesus and ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’, probably St John (John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7 and 20).

The fact that these were loving relationships does not tell anything about whether sex was involved. Love and sex are not the same thing. The question is not whether these relationships were real and loving, but whether they were sexually active. And unless this can be demonstrated, then the mere fact of the existence of these relationships is irrelevant to the question of whether the Church should accept same-sex sexual activity as normative.

A closer reading of the texts indicates that there was kissing between Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 1:9) and David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:41). Kissing and sex do not necessarily go together and there is nothing in either of the verses just mentioned to connect the two. What would be required to show that the relationships were sexual would be statements to this effect and these do not exist.

Nothing at all is said about sex in the case of Jesus or the beloved disciple and in the cases of Ruth, Naomi, David and Jonathan all that is said explicitly or implicitly is that they engaged in heterosexual sex and had children as a result. It could be argued that they were bisexual and engaged in homosexual sex as well, but there is absolutely no evidence for this.

In short, the idea that the biblical examples of same-sex relationships can be used to support the acceptance of same-sex sexual activity is a classic example of trying to make bricks without straw. The argument is based on fantasy, akin to the claim that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married and had children.

RESOURCES:

Wes Hill, [‘An Impatience with Biblical Exegesis’](#)