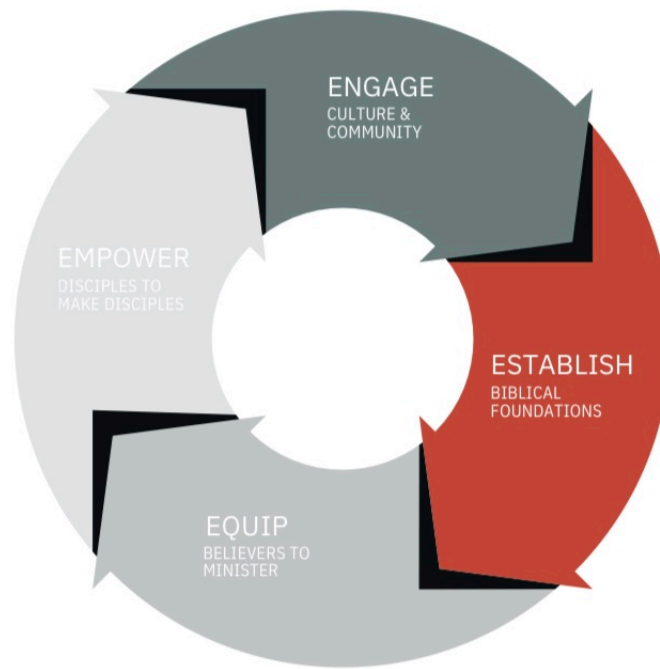


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and helping others do the same.



The purpose of our Koinonia Gatherings is to establish people in biblical foundations by building Christ-centered connections. We believe the Scriptures teaches that life change happens best in community, as we grow together in God's Word and are led by the Holy Spirit.

Below, you'll find a sermon-based guide from the most recent sermon to help lead a Rise Up Church Koinonia Gathering, along with a five day devotional designed to help you apply the sermon throughout the week.

Koinonia Gathering Guide: Advent Hope is Our Unshakable Hope

Opening Prayer

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to receive the truth of His Word and to help group members identify where they need to place their hope in Jesus.

Icebreaker

Question: When you think back over 2024, what was one moment where you felt your hope was tested? How did you respond?

Key Scripture

John 1:1-5, 11-14

Read the passage aloud together, then ask someone to summarize it in their own words.

Focal Exegesis:

The God who created the world stepped into the world to save the world, and this is our unshakable hope.

Discussion Questions

Part 1: Jesus - The Eternal God (John 1:1-3)

Question 1: The sermon contrasted "shakable" hope (finances, people, abilities) with "unshakable" hope in Jesus. What are some "chairs" (shakable things) you've been tempted to rest your hope on this year? What happened when you did?

Question 2: How does understanding that Jesus is the eternal Word who spoke creation into existence change the way you approach your current circumstances?

Question 3: The pastor said, "The same God who spoke to the world is the same Jesus who speaks to your soul." Where in your life do you need Jesus to speak light into darkness right now?

Part 2: Jesus Enters Our Darkness (John 1:4-5)

Question 4: The sermon mentioned that we often want Jesus to step into the places we light up for Him, not into our darkness. What areas of darkness in your life are you hesitant to let Jesus shine His light on?

Question 5: Corrie Ten Boom said, "There's no darkness that the love of Christ cannot reach," even in a Nazi concentration camp. What does this truth mean for the darkest situation you or someone you know is facing?

Question 6: The text says "the light shines" (present, active tense), not "the light shone" (past tense). How does knowing Jesus is actively shining light in your life right now encourage you?

Part 3: Jesus Makes Us Children of God (John 1:11-13)

Question 7: Jesus came to His own people and they rejected Him, yet He still offered them the invitation to receive Him. How does this demonstrate God's love for us when we're in our own rebellion?

Question 8: The sermon emphasized that Jesus gave us "the right" (a legal term with authority) to become children of God. What rights and authority do we have as God's children that we're not walking in?

Question 9: The pastor said, "We're satisfied with an appetizer, but God wants to give us a full course meal." In what ways have you been settling for less than what God wants to give you as His child?

Part 4: Jesus Became Flesh (John 1:14)

Question 10: How does knowing that Jesus experienced every temptation you face give you hope in your current struggles?

Question 11: The sermon stated, "Jesus knows what it feels like to be you." How does this truth change the way you approach prayer and your relationship with God?

Four Ways to Hold On to Advent Hope

Review these practical steps together:

1. Behold Who Jesus Really Is

- **Application:** This week, spend 10 minutes each day reading through John 1:1-14 and writing down one attribute of Jesus that stands out to you.

2. Bring Your Darkness to Him

- **Application:** Identify one area of darkness or sin you've been hiding. Confess it to God and consider sharing it with a trusted believer for accountability.

3. Believe and Receive Your New Identity in Jesus

- **Application:** Write out 3-5 scriptures about your identity in Christ (child of God, forgiven, redeemed, etc.) and read them aloud each morning this week.

4. Dwell with Jesus

- **Application:** Evaluate your relationship with Jesus. Are you parking Him at certain destinations, or are you walking with Him all the way? What needs to change?

Key Takeaways

- Hope is only unshakable when its source is unshakable—and that source is Jesus.
- Jesus doesn't wait for us to get it together; He pursues us in our mess.
- There is no darkness in your life that Jesus cannot light up or redeem.
- As children of God, we have authority and rights that we need to walk in.
- Advent hope requires an ongoing, committed relationship with Jesus—not a casual, convenient one.

Personal Reflection Questions

Take 3-5 minutes of silence for personal reflection:

1. Where have I been placing my hope in shakable things instead of Jesus?
2. What darkness am I hiding from Jesus that He wants to shine His light on?
3. Am I living like an abandoned child or like a beloved child of God?
4. What does it look like for me to dwell with Jesus this week?

Action Steps for This Week

Choose at least one:

- Confess one area of darkness to God and invite Him to shine His light there
- Memorize John 1:12-13
- Write a prayer thanking Jesus for stepping into your darkness
- Share with one person how Jesus has been your unshakable hope
- Audit your media consumption (music, news, social media) and ask: Is this informing my identity more than Scripture?

Closing Prayer

Pray together, asking:

- For courage to bring our darkness to Jesus
- For faith to believe our new identity as children of God
- For commitment to dwell with Jesus daily
- For the hope of Christ to be unshakable in our lives

Before Next Week

Encourage group members to share one way they experienced Jesus as their unshakable hope this week in your group chat or at the next meeting.

5-Day Advent Hope Devotional Guide

Day 1: The Eternal Word Who Speaks Into Darkness

Reading: John 1:1-5

Devotional: In the beginning, God spoke and chaos became order, darkness became light. The same Word that created everything is the Jesus who speaks into your darkness today. Whatever chaos you're facing—financial strain, relational brokenness, emotional instability—the Creator God has not abandoned His creation. He specializes in bringing light where there is none. Just as He said "Let there be light" over the formless void, He speaks hope over your formless circumstances. Your situation may look dark, but darkness has never overcome His light. The question isn't whether God can bring light to your darkness; it's whether you'll let Him speak into those shadowed places you've been hiding.

Reflection: What area of darkness in your life needs God's creative word today?

Day 2: Light That Actively Shines

Reading: John 1:4-9

Devotional: Notice the present tense: "The light shines in the darkness." Not "shone" but "shines"—actively, continuously, right now. God isn't lighting up your life once and walking away. He's persistently, lovingly illuminating the very places you think disqualify you from His presence. Like Corrie Ten Boom discovered in a Nazi concentration camp, there is no darkness—no pit, no shame, no secret sin—that Christ's love cannot reach. Jesus doesn't expose your darkness to shame you but to save you. It's an act of rescue, not rejection. He's waiting for you to step into the light, to confess what you've been hiding. When you do, something marvelous happens: the light doesn't just reveal; it transforms.

Reflection: What mask are you wearing that Jesus wants to remove today?

Day 3: Receiving Your True Identity

Reading: John 1:10-13

Devotional: Jesus came to His own people and they rejected Him—yet He still offered them the right to become children of God. This is the scandal of grace: while we were

rejecting Him, He was pursuing us. You don't need to clean up your life before coming to Jesus; you can't. That's the point. The gospel isn't "try harder"—it's "receive His love so He can transform you." When you receive Christ, you receive a legal right, an authority, a new identity. You're no longer a reject but adopted. You have the right to rebuke the enemy, walk in freedom, speak and see things change. Stop living like an abandoned child when God has given you the rights of a son or daughter. Your identity isn't built on your performance but on His promise.

Reflection: Are you living in the full authority of your identity as God's child?

Day 4: The God Who Became Flesh

Reading: John 1:14; Hebrews 4:14-16

Devotional: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. God didn't just tell us how to live; He showed us. Jesus took on human weakness, wrestled with every temptation, and conquered it all. This means Jesus knows exactly what it feels like to be you. He understands your struggle, can empathize with your pain, and sympathizes with your weakness. You're not alone in your battle. But here's the beautiful truth: He doesn't just understand your struggle—He knows how to overcome it. He's the victorious One who can lead you through what He's already conquered. When you feel misunderstood, remember that Jesus walked in flesh just like yours, faced darkness just like yours, and emerged victorious.

Reflection: How does knowing Jesus experienced your struggles change how you approach Him today?

Day 5: Dwelling With Unshakable Hope

Reading: Revelation 21:1-5; John 15:4-5

Devotional: Advent hope looks both backward and forward—to Jesus who came and Jesus who is coming again. This hope is unshakable because it's rooted in a Person, not circumstances. The God who stepped into creation to save it will return to demolish sin forever. Until then, He invites you to dwell with Him daily. Not a casual relationship where you park God when convenient, but an all-in, committed walk. Hope grows when your source is unshakable, when you behold who Jesus really is, bring your darkness to Him, believe your new identity, and dwell with Him continually. Your hope cannot rest in bank accounts, relationships, or abilities—these are shakable chairs that will collapse. Place your hope in Jesus alone: yesterday, today, and always.

Reflection: Where have you been placing your hope in shakable things instead of the unshakable Christ?

Closing Prayer for the Week: Jesus, You are my unshakable hope. You spoke light into darkness at creation and You speak light into my darkness today. Help me receive Your love, walk in my true identity as Your child, and dwell with You daily. I choose You today, yesterday, and always. Amen.