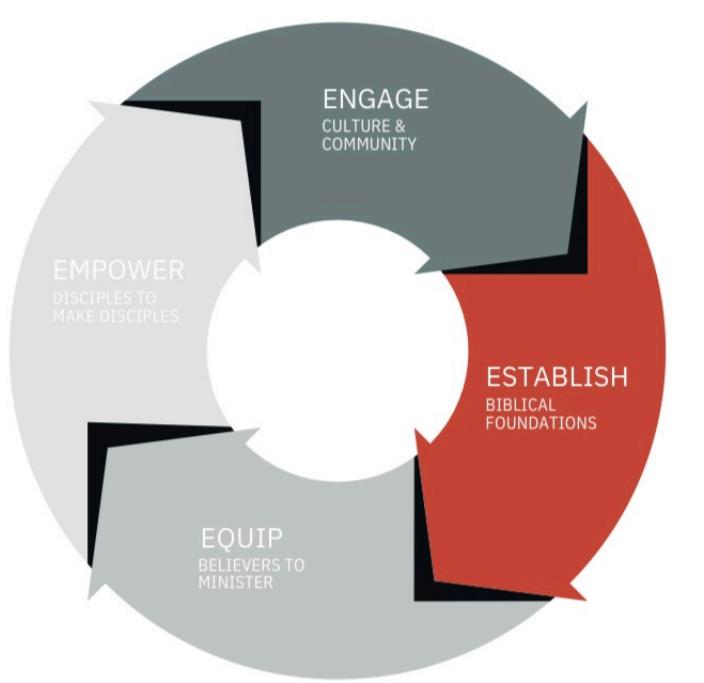


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and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

Based on John 1:1-5

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to open hearts and minds to see Jesus clearly as He truly is, not as we want Him to be.

Ice Breaker (5-10 minutes)

If you could have three wishes granted, what would they be? (Be honest!)

Leader note: Use this to transition into discussing how we often approach Jesus with our wants rather than seeking to know who He truly is.

Sermon Recap (5 minutes)

Pastor explored three key aspects of Jesus from John 1:1-5:

1. **Jesus is the REVELATION** of our life
2. **Jesus is the ILLUMINATION** of our life
3. **Jesus is the ACTIVATION** of our faith

Discussion Questions

Part 1: Jesus as Revelation (John 1:1-3)

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

1. **The Genie Question:** The pastor mentioned we sometimes treat Jesus like a "genie in a bottle." When have you been guilty of only turning to Jesus when you need something? What does it look like to move from transactional faith to relational faith?
2. **Jesus as Sustainer:** The sermon shared how God sustained Elijah both on the mountaintop (calling down fire) and in the wilderness (wanting to die). Share a time when God sustained you through a high moment AND a low moment. How did you see His faithfulness in both?

3. **Creating Our Own Jesus:** Have you ever caught yourself creating a version of Jesus that fits your preferences rather than accepting who Scripture says He is? What areas of your life reveal this tendency?

Part 2: Jesus as Illumination (John 1:4)

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

4. **Information vs. Illumination:** The pastor distinguished between having information (facts, knowledge) and illumination (direction, purpose). Where in your life do you have plenty of information but lack illumination? What would it look like to invite Jesus to illuminate that area?
5. **The GPS Analogy:** When the GPS screen goes blank, we lose direction even though we have emotions and information. What happens in your spiritual life when you lose sight of Jesus as your illumination? How do you find your way back?
6. **Uncomfortable Light:** The pastor said, "Many of us have been navigating so long in the dark that when Jesus exposes it, we have a problem." What area of your life feels uncomfortable when Jesus shines His light on it? Why do we resist the light that's meant to help us?

Part 3: Jesus as Activation (John 1:5)

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

7. **Present Tense Faith:** The light "shines" (present tense) - it's already on. What's stopping you from simply flipping the switch and walking in the light Jesus is already providing?
8. **What Must Be Left Behind:** Walking toward the light means leaving darkness behind. What specific behaviors, thought patterns, or relationships might Jesus be asking you to leave behind as you walk toward Him?
9. **The Salvation Question:** Pastor asked, "Will you allow Jesus to be your life?" How would you answer that question today? What would change in your daily routine if Jesus truly became your life, not just your religious activity?

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Jesus is eternal and sovereign** - We don't get to shape Him around our preferences

- ✓ **True life is found IN Jesus** - Not around Him, not apart from Him, but in relational union with Him
- ✓ **Jesus sustains us** - In mountaintop victories and wilderness defeats alike
- ✓ **Light exposes darkness** - Jesus reveals our sin not to shame us but to rescue us
- ✓ **Faith requires response** - We must actively turn toward the light and walk in it

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Daily Relationship

Instead of only praying when you need something, spend 10 minutes each morning simply talking to Jesus about who He is. Use John 1:1-5 as your starting point.

Option 2: Expose the Darkness

Ask Jesus to illuminate one area of your life you've been keeping in the dark. Journal what He reveals and share it with a trusted friend or accountability partner.

Option 3: Switch On the Light

Identify one area where you have information but lack direction. Commit to praying specifically for Jesus to illuminate your next step, then take that step in faith.

Option 4: Fasting & Prayer

Participate in the church's week of fasting and prayer (starting Monday). Use this time to fix your eyes on Jesus rather than your circumstances or desires.

Reflection Exercise (10 minutes)

Personal Inventory: Take 5 minutes of silence for each person to honestly answer:

1. Who have I made Jesus out to be in my life?
 - My genie? My emergency contact? My character/concept? Or my God?
2. What would change if I truly saw Jesus as:
 - The sustainer of every breath I take
 - The illumination of my purpose and direction

- The life I was created to live in
- 3. What is one specific way I will respond to Jesus this week?

Share: Invite 2-3 people to share their reflections with the group.

Closing Prayer Focus

Pray specifically for:

- Eyes to see Jesus as He truly is, not as we want Him to be
- Courage to walk toward the light even when it exposes uncomfortable truths
- Faith to trust Jesus as the sustainer of our lives in both highs and lows
- The upcoming week of fasting and prayer as a church

For Next Week

- Read John 1:6-18 in preparation for the next sermon
- Follow through on your practical application commitment
- Check in with one group member during the week about their progress

Leader Tips

- Be vulnerable first - share your own struggles with seeing Jesus clearly
- Don't rush the silence during the reflection exercise
- If someone shares about walking in darkness, respond with grace and prayer, not judgment
- Celebrate small steps of faith - turning toward the light is a process
- Consider having someone share their fasting testimony from previous experiences

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... In him was life, and the life was the light of men." - John 1:1, 4

5-Day Devotional: Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus

Day 1: Jesus, the Eternal Word

Reading: John 1:1-5

Devotional: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Jesus isn't a concept we create or a genie we summon when convenient. He is eternal, existing before time began. This truth demands we stop trying to shape God around our preferences and instead allow Him to shape us. Jesus doesn't fit into our schedules—we fit into His divine plan. Today, examine how you've been treating Jesus. Is He your authority or your accessory? The God who spoke creation into existence and sustains every breath you take deserves more than occasional acknowledgment. He desires relationship, not religious routine. Surrender your attempts to control Him and rest in His sovereign sustaining power.

Day 2: The Sustainer of Life

Reading: 1 Kings 19:1-8

Devotional: Elijah experienced both mountaintop victory and wilderness despair within days. After calling down fire from heaven, he ran in fear and begged to die. Yet God didn't abandon him in the darkness. He sent angels with provision, sustaining Elijah through his lowest moment. This is who Jesus is—the sustainer of your life in triumph and in tragedy. He doesn't only show up when you're strong; He carries you when you're weak. Whatever wilderness you're hiding in today, know that God is already there with provision. He sustains you breath by breath, moment by moment. You don't have to perform or pretend. Simply receive His sustaining grace and trust Him to carry you through.

Day 3: True Life Found Only in Him

Reading: John 15:1-5

Devotional: "Apart from me you can do nothing." These words cut through our illusions of self-sufficiency. We chase promotions, relationships, experiences, and possessions, believing they constitute "the good life." But Jesus offers something fundamentally different—zoe life, the divine quality of existence found only in union with Him. This isn't about comfort or ease; it's about purpose, peace in chaos, and sustainability through every season. The world's version of life is like chasing a high that never satisfies, always demanding more yet delivering less. In Christ, there is fullness. Today, identify what you've been pursuing apart from Jesus. Confess your need for Him and ask Him to become your true source of life, not just an addition to it.

Day 4: Walking in the Light

Reading: 1 John 1:5-10

Devotional: Light doesn't negotiate with darkness—it exposes and displaces it. When Jesus illuminates your life, He reveals what's been hidden in shadow. This can feel uncomfortable, even painful, like walking from a dark room into bright sunlight. But we were never meant to navigate life in darkness. Jesus doesn't shine His light to shame you but to guide you home. His illumination provides direction and purpose, like a GPS showing the way forward. The question isn't whether Jesus can handle your darkness—He already defeated it on the cross. The question is whether you'll step into His light. Today, invite Jesus to expose one area of darkness you've been hiding. Trust that His light brings healing, not condemnation.

Day 5: Activating Your Faith

Reading: James 2:14-26

Devotional: Faith in Jesus isn't passive—it's activated. When light enters a dark room, you don't debate whether to flip the switch; you simply do it. Yet we often treat faith as an intellectual exercise, endlessly discussing theology while refusing to take steps of trust. The light is already on; you need only receive it and walk in it. This means turning toward Jesus, which simultaneously means turning away from darkness. Yes, you'll leave things behind—your self-sufficiency, your hidden sins, your comfortable compromises. But you'll gain everything that truly matters: relationship with the living God. Today, stop debating and start walking. What one step of obedience is Jesus calling you to take? Activate your faith by trusting Him enough to move forward.

Closing Reflection: Jesus is the revelation of true life, the illumination of our path, and the activation of our faith. He doesn't ask for perfection—He asks for surrender. Will you see Him for who He truly is and fix your eyes on the Savior who never lets you down?