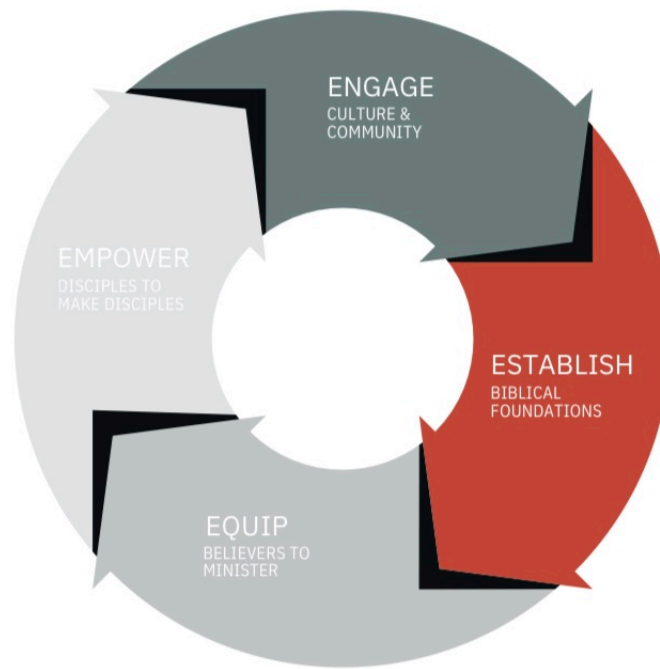


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and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

Title: Preparation for Ministry

Focal Exegesis: Preparation for ministry includes repentance, receiving, resisting and responding.

Leader Guide

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead the discussion, soften hearts, and point everyone toward Jesus.
- Be sensitive to where the Spirit is moving—sometimes the most powerful ministry happens in someone's story.
- Encourage participation from everyone. Ask open-ended questions and give space for honest reflection.
- Remember, your role is not to lecture but to facilitate transformation through conversation and prayer.

Sermon Summary

Preparation matters in every area of life—but especially in the kingdom of God. Even Jesus, before performing a miracle, calling a disciple, or teaching a crowd, prepared for ministry. His preparation shows us what true readiness looks like—not in doing more, but in being formed into His likeness. In Matthew 3–4, Jesus models four stages of preparation: Repentance, Receiving, Resisting, and Responding. John the Baptist's ministry of repentance paved the way for Jesus' arrival, reminding us that we must turn away from sin and pride to make room for God's work. Jesus' baptism affirmed His identity as the beloved Son of God. Likewise, before we can serve, we must rest securely in who God says we are. Jesus' temptation in the wilderness demonstrates that preparation involves resisting the enemy through the power of God's Word. Finally, when Jesus called His disciples, they immediately responded—leaving everything behind. Their obedience teaches us that delayed obedience is still disobedience. Preparation for ministry, then, is about character formation before public service, identity before activity, and obedience before outcome. God is not just preparing us for ministry—He's preparing us through ministry. And Jesus Himself has already gone before us: repenting on our behalf, receiving the Father's love for us, resisting the enemy's lies, and responding to the Father's call all the way to the cross.

Point: We Must Repent (Matthew 3:1–6)

Repentance is not a feeling—it's an action. It means to turn from sin, pride, and self-reliance and to turn toward God in humility and obedience. John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus by calling people to repentance, echoing Isaiah's prophecy to "prepare the way of the Lord." Repentance clears the road for the King to enter our hearts. It's pride that keeps many from repenting, but humility opens the door for God to renew us.

Life-Changing Application Question: What area of your life needs to be turned back toward God this week? What potholes in your heart need to be filled so the King can come through?

Leader Guide Notes:

- Help your group see repentance as an invitation, not condemnation.
- Share personal examples of repentance leading to growth.
- Remind them: God's call to repentance is always rooted in love, not shame.

Defeater Belief: "I've gone too far for God to forgive me."

Truth: God's grace is greater than your sin. Repentance doesn't expose your failure—it reveals His faithfulness. (1 John 1:9)

Point: Receive Your Identity Given by Jesus (Matthew 3:13–17)

At Jesus' baptism, He identified with sinners so that sinners could be identified with Him. Though sinless, He entered the waters of repentance to fulfill all righteousness. The Father affirmed Him, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Before Jesus ever performed a miracle, His identity was affirmed. Likewise, before we do ministry, we must receive our God-given identity as beloved children of God—secure, forgiven, and chosen.

Life-Changing Application Question: Do you live like a beloved child of God—or like someone still trying to earn His approval?

Leader Guide Notes:

- Ask members to reflect on labels they've accepted that contradict God's truth.
- Encourage them to speak Scripture over themselves this week (Romans 8:37–39).
- Remind them: our doing flows from our being.

Defeater Belief: "My worth depends on my performance."

Truth: Your identity is not achieved—it's received. God was pleased with Jesus before He did anything, and in Christ, He's pleased with you too.

Point: Resist the Tempter with the Word of God (Matthew 4:1–11)

After His baptism, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Preparation always includes testing. Satan tempted Jesus in the lust of the flesh ("turn stones to bread"), the pride of life ("throw yourself down"), and the lust of the eyes ("I'll give you all these kingdoms"). Each time, Jesus responded with Scripture, demonstrating that the Word of God is our greatest weapon. Temptation isn't sin; it's a test. Jesus' victory shows us that resistance is possible—and that every temptation can be overcome with the truth of God's Word.

Life-Changing Application Question: When temptation comes, do you respond with what you think—or with what God has said?

Leader Guide Notes:

- Challenge everyone to memorize one verse this week to use in temptation.
- Remind them that victory is not found in willpower but in God's power.

- Reinforce that testing strengthens our spiritual muscles.

Defeater Belief: “I’m too weak to resist.”

Truth: The same Spirit that empowered Jesus now lives in you (Romans 8:11). You fight from victory, not for it.

Point: Respond to God Immediately Without Procrastination (Matthew 4:18–22)

When Jesus called the disciples, they immediately left their nets to follow Him. Their nets represented their livelihood, security, and identity. They didn’t delay, debate, or negotiate—they simply obeyed. Procrastination says, “I’ll do later what God is asking me to do now.” But delayed obedience is still disobedience. True preparation means saying “yes” today—not tomorrow.

Life-Changing Application Question: What “net” is God asking you to let go of so you can follow Him fully right now?

Leader Guide Notes:

- Encourage honesty. Nets can be relationships, habits, fears, or comfort zones.
- Share personal examples of stepping out in faith.
- Pray for boldness to obey immediately.

Defeater Belief: “I’ll follow God when I’m ready.”

Truth: You’ll never feel ready—but obedience makes you ready. Faith is stepping before you see.

Ways to Overcome Doubts (Defeater Beliefs)

Common Doubt	Biblical Truth
I’ve messed up too much.	God’s mercy is new every morning. (Lamentations 3:22–23)
I’m not qualified.	God doesn’t call the qualified—He qualifies the called. (1 Corinthians 1:27)
Temptation means I’m weak.	Even Jesus was tempted, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)
I’ll obey when life is easier.	The perfect time to obey is always now. (Proverbs 3:5–6)

5-Day Devotional: Preparation for Ministry

Day 1 – The Call to Repent

Read: Matthew 3:1–6

Reflect: What roadblocks need clearing for the King to move freely in your heart?

Pray: “Lord, reveal anything in me that needs to change. Help me turn from sin and turn toward You.”

Day 2 – Receiving Your Identity

Read: Matthew 3:13–17

Reflect: Do you live from a place of God’s approval or striving for it?

Pray: “Father, thank You that I am Your beloved child. Help me rest in who You say I am.”

Day 3 – Resisting the Enemy

Read: Matthew 4:1–11

Reflect: What lie has the enemy been whispering to you lately? Find a verse that speaks God's truth over it.

Pray: “God, strengthen me by Your Word. Let Your truth silence every lie.”

Day 4 – Responding Without Delay

Read: Matthew 4:18–22

Reflect: What is your “net”? What step of obedience are you postponing?

Pray: “Jesus, give me courage to say yes to You today. I trust that Your plan is better than mine.”

Day 5 – The Example of Jesus

Read: Philippians 2:5–11

Reflect: Jesus obeyed the Father all the way to the cross for you. How can you follow His example in your daily life?

Pray: “Lord Jesus, thank You for not delaying my salvation. Help me follow You with the same urgency and obedience.”