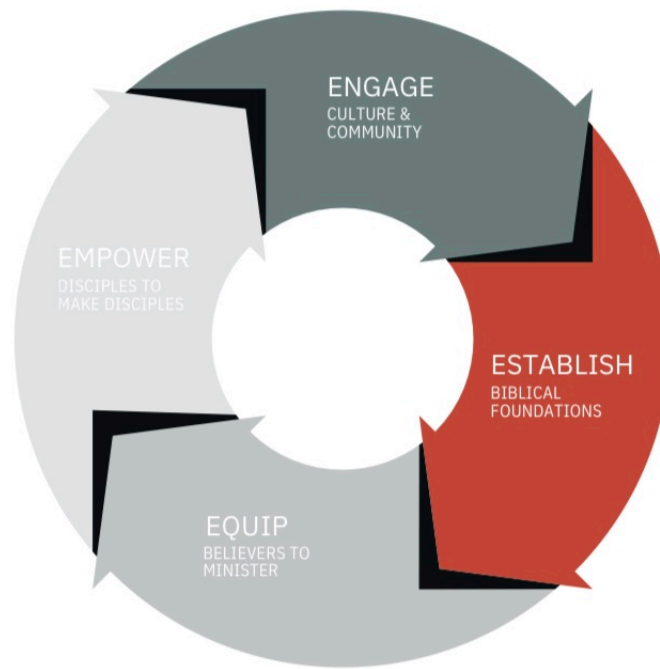


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and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

Sermon Title: Jesus is Calling My Name

Focal Exegesis: Because Jesus rose from the dead, despair can turn to hope, doubt can turn to faith, and death can turn to life.

Leader Guide

- Begin with prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead.
- Encourage everyone to share—don't let just a few voices dominate.
- Remind the group: the goal is transformation, not just information.
- Guide the conversation gently, but always point back to Jesus and Scripture.

In-Depth Sermon Summary

John's resurrection account focuses on Mary Magdalene, highlighting her grief, despair, and confusion that turned into joy when Jesus called her by name. The text moves us through three powerful truths: the resurrection turns despair into hope, doubt into faith, and death into life. For Mary, grief gave way to recognition and relationship. For Peter and John, doubt was met with evidence that built their faith. For all of us, Jesus' resurrection is an invitation into new life. The resurrection is not just a past event—it's a present power. It speaks directly to our despair, doubts, and struggles with death, offering real hope, true faith, and eternal life.

Point 1: The Resurrection Turns Despair into Hope (John 20:1–2, 11–15)

Summary: Mary came to the tomb expecting silence, grief, and death. She found the stone rolled away and her despair deepened. Yet Jesus was present even when she didn't see Him. Biblical hope is not wishful thinking, but confident trust in God's promises, presence, and power.

Application Question: Where in your life do you feel despair right now—and how does the resurrection offer hope in that place?

Leader Notes: Draw out examples of despair from group members. Highlight Ezekiel 37:11 and 1 Peter 1:3. Remind them that hope rests in God's promises, presence, and power—not circumstances.

Overcoming Doubts (Defeater Beliefs): Doubt: God is silent. My story is over. Truth: The empty tomb declares God is still speaking and your story is not over.

Point 2: The Resurrection Turns Doubt into Faith (John 20:3–10)

Summary: Peter and John ran to the tomb. John hesitated, Peter entered boldly, and John believed though he didn't yet understand everything. Faith often begins with evidence before full comprehension. Doubt, when submitted to Jesus, becomes a pathway to deeper faith.

Application Question: What doubts about God do you need to submit to Him rather than to substitutes?

Leader Notes: Explain the difference between doubt submitted to Jesus (Mark 9:24) and doubt submitted to substitutions (fear, cultural pressure, sinful desires). Encourage honesty in sharing personal doubts. Use the Elixir disaster illustration: substitutions for Jesus may look appealing but lead to destruction.

Overcoming Doubts (Defeater Beliefs): Doubt: I can't trust God because my questions are too big. Truth: The resurrection can withstand your doubts. Jesus invites honest wrestling, not blind faith.

Point 3: The Resurrection Turns Death into Life (John 20:15–18)

Summary: Mary did not recognize Jesus until He called her by name. Her grief turned to devotion and mission. Just as death entered the world in a garden, now life is restored in a garden through Jesus. The resurrection reframes our identity, restores relationship, and redirects our purpose.

Application Question: How is Jesus calling your name today—and how will you respond?

Leader Notes: Highlight John 10:3: Jesus knows His sheep by name. Draw connections to the garden of Eden and new creation life in Christ. Encourage participants to share how they sense Jesus speaking personally.

Overcoming Doubts (Defeater Beliefs): Doubt: Life will never change. Death and despair win. Truth: Jesus offers abundant and eternal life, calling you by name.

5-Day Devotional

Day 1 – Despair to Hope

Scripture: John 20:1–2, 11–15; Ezekiel 37:11

Reflection: When life feels hopeless, remember that Jesus is present even when unseen.

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to see You when despair clouds my vision.

Day 2 – Hope Rooted in God's Promises

Scripture: John 20:9; 1 Peter 1:3

Reflection: Hope is rooted not in circumstances but in God's unchanging Word.

Prayer: Father, anchor my hope in Your promises that never fail.

Day 3 – Doubt to Faith

Scripture: John 20:3–10; Mark 9:24

Reflection: Doubt submitted to Jesus becomes a doorway to faith.

Prayer: Jesus, I bring You my doubts. Help my unbelief and grow my trust.

Day 4 – Guard Against Substitutions

Scripture: Genesis 3; John 12:42–43

Reflection: Substitutions promise answers but lead to despair. Only Jesus turns doubt into faith.

Prayer: Lord, keep me from leaning on substitutes. Let me trust You fully.

Day 5 – Death to Life

Scripture: John 20:15–18; John 10:3

Reflection: Jesus calls you by name into abundant life.

Prayer: Jesus, thank You for knowing my name. Lead me from death to life in You.