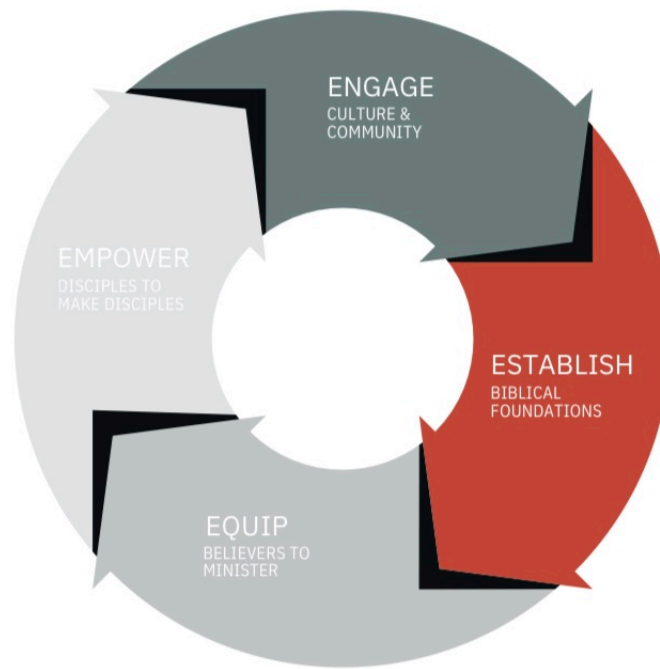


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and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

## Follow Him

### Focal Exegesis: Mark 8:27–34

27 Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, “Who do men say that I am?” 28 So they answered, “John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” 29 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.” 30 Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him. 31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. 33 But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” 34 When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”

### Leader Guide

Leaders, begin your time in prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to lead your discussion and soften hearts to God’s Word. Encourage participation from everyone and foster an environment of grace, honesty, and transformation.

### Sermon Summary

In Mark 8:27–34, Jesus takes His disciples to Caesarea Philippi—a city filled with idols—and asks, “Who do you say that I am?” This moment defines what it means to truly follow Him. Peter declares, “You are the Christ,” revealing awareness of Jesus’ identity, but when Jesus explains His coming suffering, Peter rebukes Him. Jesus then confronts Peter for thinking from a human perspective rather than God’s. Through this, Jesus teaches that following Him requires three things: awareness of who He is, alignment with God’s will and Word, and action—denying ourselves, taking up our cross, and following Him. True discipleship is not about comfort or convenience but surrender and transformation.

### Point 1: Awareness

Jesus asks, “Who do you say that I am?” (v. 29). In a world of many opinions, Jesus challenges us to personally recognize His true identity. Awareness means knowing that Jesus is the Christ—the Anointed One sent to save humanity from sin.

Life Application: How do you personally answer Jesus’ question: Who do you say that I am?

Leader Note: Encourage open sharing. Help participants connect their understanding of Jesus' identity to their personal faith and experiences.

## **Point 2: Alignment**

Peter recognizes who Jesus is but rebukes Him for talking about suffering. Jesus responds, "Get behind me, Satan! You are not mindful of the things of God, but of men." (v. 33). Awareness without alignment leads to wrong actions. Alignment means submitting our thoughts and desires to God's Word.

Life Application: In what areas of your life is God calling you to align your perspective with His Word?

Leader Note: Help participants explore the difference between good intentions and godly alignment. Encourage repentance where needed.

## **Point 3: Action**

Jesus says, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me." (v. 34). Following Jesus means surrendering our own will and embracing His, even when it costs us comfort or control. It's choosing obedience over convenience.

Life Application: What does denying yourself and taking up your cross look like in your daily life?

Leader Note: Encourage practical examples of obedience and sacrifice. Share personal testimonies of transformation through surrender.

## **Overcoming Defeater Beliefs**

Some may believe following Jesus means comfort, not sacrifice. Others may think denying self means losing identity. The truth is, Jesus calls us to find our truest selves in Him. His call to deny self is not to diminish you—it's to redeem you. Overcome these doubts by meditating on His love and remembering that His ways lead to life, not loss.

## **5-Day Devotional**

### **Day 1 – Awareness: Who Do You Say Jesus Is?**

Read: Mark 8:27–29

Reflect on who Jesus is to you personally. Pray that your awareness deepens into relationship.

### **Day 2 – Alignment: Setting Your Mind on God’s Word**

Read: Mark 8:31–33

Ask the Lord to align your thoughts with His truth. Write down areas where you’ve been mindful of men instead of God.

### **Day 3 – Action: Following Jesus His Way**

Read: Mark 8:34

Ask: What does it look like to follow Jesus daily? What habits or desires do you need to surrender?

### **Day 4 – Deny Yourself: Choosing Eternal Purpose**

Read: Mark 14:36

Reflect on Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane. Ask for the strength to say, ‘Not my will, but Yours be done.’

### **Day 5 – Take Up Your Cross: Living Surrendered Daily**

Read: Galatians 2:20

Recommit to living crucified with Christ. End your time thanking God for the life you have in Him.

## **Closing Prayer**

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to be aware of who You truly are, aligned with Your Word, and active in following You daily. Teach me to deny myself, take up my cross, and follow You in faith and obedience. Amen.