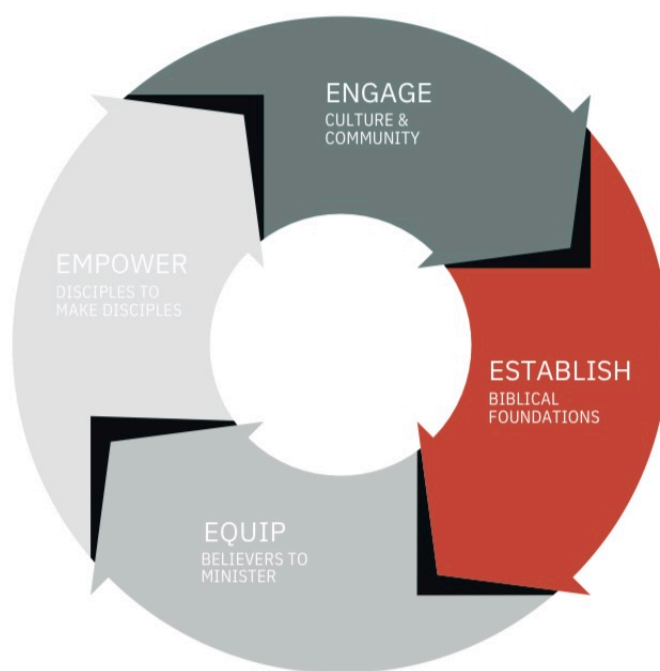


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and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

Scripture: John 20:1-20

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by thanking God for the resurrection and asking the Holy Spirit to open hearts and minds to what He wants to reveal through this discussion.

Icebreaker Question

What did Easter/Resurrection Sunday mean to you growing up, and how has that understanding changed over the years?

Key Sermon Points

Main Message

The miracle of the resurrection transforms:

- **Fear into Faith**
- **Death into Life**
- **And calls us to believe and be sent by Christ**

Discussion Questions

Part 1: Fear into Faith

1. **Mary's Response to Fear** (John 20:1-10)
 - Mary came to the tomb with a plan that didn't work out. When have your plans fallen apart because Jesus wasn't at the center? How did you respond?
2. **John's Hesitation vs. Peter's Action**
 - John hesitated at the tomb because of fear (being made "unclean"). What fears from your past keep you from fully stepping into what God has for you?
 - Peter rushed in without thinking. Which disciple do you relate to more—the hesitant one or the impulsive one? Why?

3. **The Folded Face Cloth** (v. 7)

- The pastor pointed out that Jesus neatly folded the face cloth as evidence that death couldn't hold Him. What "evidence" of Jesus' power have you seen in your own life that helps combat your fears?

4. **"What If" Fears**

- The sermon mentioned fears that sound like: "What if God doesn't come through?" or "What if my situation never changes?" What "what if" fears are you currently battling?

Part 2: Death into Life

5. **Mary's Recognition** (John 20:11-18)

- Mary didn't recognize Jesus until He spoke her name. When have you experienced Jesus calling your name in a personal way? How did you respond?

6. **The Three R's: Recognize, Reorient, Repurpose**

- Which of these three steps is most challenging for you right now?
 - **Recognize** Jesus' voice
 - **Reorient** your life toward Him
 - **Repurpose** yourself for His mission

7. **Dead Belief vs. Resurrection Belief**

- The pastor contrasted "dead belief" (intellectual agreement) with "resurrection belief" (life-changing faith). Be honest: Where does your faith fall on this spectrum right now?

8. **Dead Belief Examples:**

- "I believe Jesus lived, but I won't follow Him"
- "I believe the Bible is true, but it doesn't apply to me"

9. **Resurrection Belief Examples:**

- "Even when I disagree, I'll obey"
- "I will follow, be formed by, and move forward with Jesus"

Part 3: Believe and Be Sent

8. **"Peace Be With You"** (John 20:19-21)

- Jesus didn't shame the disciples for hiding in fear—He spoke peace over them. What area of your life needs Jesus to speak "peace be still" right now?
9. **The Breath of New Life** (John 20:22)
- Jesus breathed on the disciples, giving them the Holy Spirit. This mirrors God breathing life into Adam. In what areas of your life do you need Jesus to breathe new life?
10. **Sent on Mission** (John 20:21)
- "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." What mission has Jesus given you that you've been avoiding or delaying?

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **The resurrection isn't just historical—it's personal.** Jesus calls each of us by name.
- ✓ **Fear is answered by the presence of the resurrected Savior,** not by taking control ourselves.
- ✓ **Dead places in our lives can be resurrected** when Jesus speaks life into them.
- ✓ **The resurrection requires a response**—not just intellectual agreement, but life transformation.
- ✓ **Jesus didn't rise just to be worshiped—He rose to send us on mission.**

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose **ONE** of the following to put into practice this week:

1. **Recognize His Voice**
 - Spend 15 minutes each day in silence, asking Jesus to speak your name and reveal what He wants to say to you. Journal what you hear.
2. **Reorient Your Life**
 - Identify one area where your life is not oriented toward Jesus (finances, relationships, career, time management). Take one concrete step to reorient it this week.

3. **Repurpose for Mission**

- Like Mary, who was told "go and tell," identify one person you need to share the resurrection with. Pray for them daily and look for an opportunity to have a conversation.

4. **Confront Your Fear**

- Write down your biggest "what if" fear. Then write out what the resurrection says about that fear. Memorize a scripture that speaks peace to that situation.

5. **Move from Dead Belief to Resurrection Belief**

- Identify one area where you have "dead belief" (you believe it intellectually but aren't living it out). Confess it to a trusted friend in your group and ask for accountability.

Reflection Questions for Personal Time

- Where in my life am I still looking for Jesus in a tomb (expecting Him to be dead/absent) rather than recognizing He's alive?
- What plans do I have that don't include Jesus at the center?
- Am I clinging to Jesus in a way that keeps me from being sent by Him?
- What would change in my life if I truly believed in the resurrection power available to me today?

Scripture for Further Study

- **Genesis 2:7** - God breathing life into Adam
- **Luke 24:1-12** - Another resurrection account
- **Romans 6:4-11** - Raised to walk in newness of life
- **1 Corinthians 15:12-20** - The centrality of the resurrection
- **Ephesians 2:1-10** - From death to life in Christ
- **Philippians 3:10-11** - The power of His resurrection

Closing Prayer Points

- Thank Jesus for His resurrection and what it means for us personally
- Pray for areas where fear needs to be transformed into faith

- Ask for resurrection power in dead areas of our lives
- Pray for boldness to be sent on mission
- Intercede for group members' specific needs shared during discussion

Group Leader Notes

- **Be Vulnerable:** Share your own struggles with fear, dead belief, or being sent on mission
- **Create Safety:** Some may be wrestling with shame or guilt—remind them of Jesus' response to the disciples (peace, not condemnation)
- **Encourage Honesty:** It's okay if people are in different places—some may be encountering Jesus for the first time
- **Follow Up:** Check in with group members during the week about their practical application commitments
- **Celebrate Stories:** If someone shares a testimony of resurrection power in their life, celebrate it!

Remember: The resurrection isn't just something we celebrate once a year—it's the power available to us every single day. Let's live like we believe it!

5-Day Devotional: The Resurrection That Changes Everything

Day 1: From Fear to Faith

Reading: John 20:1-10

Devotional: Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb with a plan—to grieve and anoint her Savior. Instead, she found an empty tomb and her plans unraveled. Like Mary, we often construct careful plans for our future, only to discover Jesus has something different in mind. When our plans fall apart, fear rushes in. But notice what happened: the neatly folded grave cloth testified that death couldn't hold Jesus. Your fears about the future, your past, or your present circumstances cannot hold back God's resurrection power. Faith begins when we choose to trust God's word over what we see. Today, identify one fear you're holding and surrender it to the risen Christ. Let Him transform your "what ifs" into "even though" faith.

Day 2: Peace in the Midst of Fear

Reading: John 20:19-23

Devotional: The disciples huddled behind locked doors, terrified for their lives. Then Jesus appeared and spoke one word: "Peace." He didn't shame them for hiding. He didn't question their fear. He simply stepped into their fear and offered shalom—the peace where all good things flow. Notice Jesus didn't change their external circumstances; the threat from the religious leaders remained. Instead, He breathed new life into them. The resurrection doesn't always remove our storms, but it gives us peace in the midst of them. What situation is causing you to hide behind locked doors today? Jesus stands ready to step into that very space and speak peace over your chaos. His resurrection power claims victory over whatever threatens you.

Day 3: Death Becomes Life

Reading: John 20:11-18

Devotional: Mary stood weeping at the tomb, so consumed by grief she didn't recognize Jesus—even mistaking Him for the gardener. How fitting! In the original garden, sin brought death. Now, in this garden tomb, Jesus reverses the curse and speaks life. Then He called her name: "Mary." Immediately, she recognized His voice and reoriented her entire life toward Him. The resurrection isn't just historical fact; it's personal transformation. Jesus knows your name. He's calling you out of the dead places in your life—dead dreams, dead relationships, dead hope. When you hear His voice, you must respond: recognize Him, reorient your life toward Him, and be repurposed for His mission. What dead thing in your life needs Jesus to breathe resurrection life into today?

Day 4: Belief That Moves

Reading: John 20:24-31

Devotional: There's a vast difference between dead belief and resurrection belief. Dead belief says, "I believe Jesus existed" but never follows Him. Resurrection belief transforms your entire life. Mary believed so completely that she immediately obeyed Jesus' command to go tell the disciples, even though she wanted to cling to Him. Resurrection belief doesn't wait for perfect understanding—it moves in obedience. It says, "Even when I disagree or don't understand, I trust You, Jesus." This kind of belief is evidence of genuine life change. Examine your own faith today: Is it merely intellectual agreement, or is it resurrection belief that compels you to follow, be formed by, and move forward with Jesus? Let the reality of the empty tomb move you from theory to transformation.

Day 5: Sent by the Risen Christ

Reading: John 20:21-23; Matthew 28:16-20

Devotional: Jesus didn't rise from the grave just to give you eternal life someday—He rose with a mission for you today. "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." Then He breathed on His disciples, echoing Genesis when God breathed life into Adam. You are a new creation, equipped with the Holy Spirit, sent on mission. The resurrection demands a response. You cannot celebrate Easter with expensive clothes and brunch plans while leaving your life unchanged. Jesus calls you by name to rise from whatever grave you've been in and join His mission. What has Jesus been calling you to do that you've delayed? What dream, ministry, or act of obedience have you buried? The same power that raised Christ from the dead lives in you. Today is resurrection day—will you respond and be sent?

