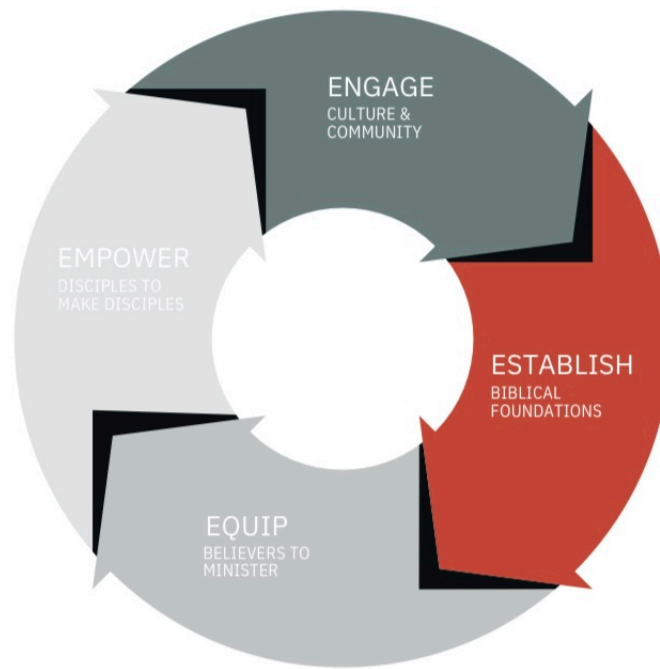


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and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

Based on John 10:11-19

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by thanking God for being the Good Shepherd who never abandons His sheep and for conquering death on our behalf.

Ice Breaker

Share a time when someone showed up for you when you really needed them. How did that make you feel?

Key Takeaways

1. The Good Shepherd Lays Down His Life

Jesus is not just any shepherd—He is the GOOD shepherd, meaning morally excellent, perfect, genuine, and nothing greater. He voluntarily and willingly laid down His life for us.

2. The Good Shepherd Never Abandons His Sheep

Unlike the hired hand who flees when danger comes, Jesus promises: "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Our feelings are not the litmus test for God's presence—His promises are.

3. The Good Shepherd Gathers His Sheep

While the enemy scatters, attacks, and divides, God gathers His people into one flock. He comes to rescue us right where we are, even in our darkest moments.

4. The Good Shepherd Conquers Death

Jesus has authority over death, sin, and the grave. Because He conquered, we are "more than conquerors" through Him—meaning no condemnation, no guilt, no shame, only love and acceptance.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. What does it mean that Jesus is the "GOOD" shepherd versus just any shepherd? How does this change your understanding of who Jesus is?
2. Read the passage about David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17:34-37). How does David's role as a shepherd foreshadow Jesus as the Good Shepherd?
3. What is the difference between the hired hand and the Good Shepherd? Why does this distinction matter for our lives?

Personal Reflection

4. The sermon asked: "Where in my life do I not think God is good?" Take a moment to honestly share areas where you struggle to believe God is good.
5. When have you felt abandoned or scattered? How does knowing that God never abandons you speak to that experience?
6. The pastor shared a vulnerable story about his own waywardness and God's pursuit. When has God "gathered" you from a dark or scattered place?

Application

7. What does it look like practically to tell your soul "God is good" on Monday when the boss isn't good, or Tuesday when your spouse forgets something, or Thursday when you get bad news?
8. The sermon states: "You are more than a conqueror." What sin, struggle, or identity from your past do you need to start viewing as something you're CONQUERING rather than something you're stuck in?
9. How does the enemy try to scatter and divide us as believers? What are some practical ways we can resist division and stay gathered as one flock?

Going Deeper

Read Romans 8:31-39 together as a group.

- What stands out to you about this passage in light of today's sermon?
- How does Paul's confidence in God's love challenge or encourage you?
- What would change in your daily life if you truly believed nothing could separate you from God's love?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

1. **Declare God's Goodness Daily:** Each morning, speak out loud: "God is good all the time, and all the time God is good—even in [specific situation]."
2. **Overcome One Thing:** Identify one sin or struggle you've been dealing with. Instead of saying "I struggle with...", start declaring "I am conquering [this] through Christ Jesus."
3. **Gather, Don't Scatter:** Reach out to someone in your church community you've been distant from or someone who seems isolated. Take a step toward gathering rather than scattering.
4. **Memorize Scripture:** Commit Romans 8:38-39 to memory. When anxiety, fear, or doubt arise, speak this truth over yourself.

Accountability Partner:

Pair up with someone in your group to check in with during the week about your chosen challenge.

Reflection Questions for the Week

- Where do I need to experience God as my rescuer this week?
- What lies has the enemy been telling me that contradict the truth that I'm more than a conqueror?
- How can I live more confidently knowing God will never abandon me?

Closing Prayer

Pray together:

- Thank God for being the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for us
- Ask for faith to believe we are more than conquerors
- Pray for specific areas where group members struggle to believe God is good
- Ask God to help you gather rather than scatter as His flock

Additional Resources

Scriptures to Study This Week:

- Psalm 23 (The Lord is my Shepherd)
- Ezekiel 34:11-16 (God as Shepherd)
- Hebrews 13:5-6 (God will never leave you)
- 1 Peter 2:25 (Returning to the Shepherd)

Question for Next Week: How has your view of God as the Good Shepherd changed your daily life this week?

Remember: God is good all the time, and all the time God is good—not because of your circumstances, but because of His character and His promises.

5-Day Devotional: The Good Shepherd's Love

Day 1: The Shepherd Who Never Abandons

Reading: Deuteronomy 31:6-8; Hebrews 13:5-6

Devotional: The Good Shepherd makes a promise that no human can keep: "I will never leave you nor forsake you." In our darkest valleys, when anxiety rises and bills remain unpaid, when relationships crumble and dreams die, God remains. Your feelings are not the litmus test for His presence; His promises are. Abandonment means leaving someone when they need you most, but Jesus laid down His life precisely when we needed Him most. Today, whatever trial you face, declare this truth: God has not abandoned me. He is Emmanuel, God with us, in every Monday morning struggle and every Thursday night crisis. His presence is not contingent on your circumstances but anchored in His unchanging character.

Reflection: Where do you feel most abandoned right now? Speak God's promise of presence over that specific situation.

Day 2: More Than Conquerors

Reading: Romans 8:31-39; 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

Devotional: You are not barely surviving; you are more than a conqueror through Christ. This is not positive thinking but resurrection power. Jesus conquered death, sin, and the grave, which means the sins you struggle with today are already defeated. That addiction? Conquered. That bitterness? Overcome. That shame from your past? Crucified with Christ. The enemy wants you to identify with your struggles, but God calls you to identify with His victory. When Satan brings up your past, remind him of his future. You fell yesterday, but you are conquering today. You stumbled this morning, but you are overcoming this afternoon. Victory is not perfection; it is pressing forward in the power of the risen Christ.

Reflection: What one area of struggle will you begin calling "conquered" instead of "my struggle"?

Day 3: The Shepherd Who Gathers

Reading: Isaiah 56:3-8; John 10:14-16

Devotional: The enemy scatters; God gathers. While the world divides us by politics, race, economics, and opinions, Jesus says, "I must bring them also." Notice: not "I should" or "it would be nice," but "I must." You are not an afterthought in God's plan; you are the reason Jesus came. He left the ninety-nine to find you in your darkest moment, in your deepest sin, in your greatest rebellion. The Good Shepherd comes to where you are, sees what you hide, and loves you anyway. He gathers the outcasts, the broken, the messy, and the wounded into one flock under one Shepherd. You belong not because you earned it, but because He came for you.

Reflection: Who in your life needs to know they belong in God's flock? How can you extend His gathering love today?

Day 4: Voluntarily Laid Down

Reading: John 10:11-18; Philippians 2:5-11

Devotional: Jesus did not die as a victim; He died as a victor. "No one takes my life from me; I lay it down of my own accord." He had the authority to call legions of angels, to open the earth, to destroy His enemies. Instead, He chose the cross. He chose you. This voluntary sacrifice reveals the depth of God's love—not obligated, not coerced, but freely given. When you feel unworthy of love, remember: Jesus knew every sin you would commit, every time you would fail, every moment you would doubt, and He still chose to die for you. His love is not based on your performance but on His character. He is good all the time because His goodness does not depend on your goodness.

Reflection: Meditate on one specific sin Jesus died for. Thank Him for voluntarily bearing that burden.

Day 5: Knowing the Shepherd's Voice

Reading: John 10:3-5, 27-28; Psalm 23

Devotional: The sheep know their shepherd's voice because they spend time with him. In a noisy world full of competing voices—culture's demands, social media's lies, the enemy's accusations—can you distinguish your Shepherd's voice? He speaks life, not

condemnation. He speaks truth, not shame. He speaks hope, not despair. The hired hand runs when trouble comes, but the Good Shepherd runs toward you in your trouble. He knows you intimately—your fears, your failures, your secret struggles—and He calls you by name. Today, silence the other voices. Sit in His presence. Listen for the voice that says, "You are mine. I will never leave you. You are more than a conqueror."

Reflection: What voices are competing with the Shepherd's voice in your life? How will you create space to hear Him today?

Closing Prayer: Good Shepherd, thank You for laying down Your life for me. Help me to live as more than a conqueror, secure in Your love that never abandons, always gathers, and eternally conquers. Teach me to recognize Your voice above all others. In Jesus' name, Amen.