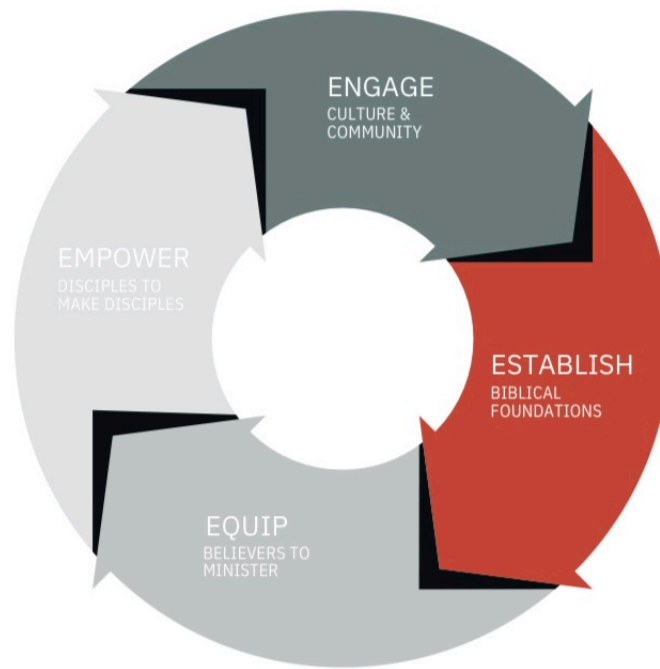


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and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

Scripture John 10:1-10

Opening Prayer

Begin by asking God to help your group hear His voice clearly and trust Him more fully as the Good Shepherd.

Ice Breaker

Share a time when you followed someone's directions (GPS, a friend, etc.) and ended up in the wrong place. What happened? How did it make you feel?

Key Scripture

John 10:9-10 - "I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

Main Focus

The voice you follow reveals the shepherd you trust, and the shepherd you trust determines the life you experience.

Discussion Questions

Part 1: Following the Shepherd's Voice

1. **Personal Recognition:** What does it mean to you personally that Jesus knows you by name? How does this truth impact how you view yourself and your relationship with God?
2. **Going Before Us:** The sermon mentioned that Jesus "goes before" His sheep. Where in your life right now do you need to trust that Jesus has already gone before you? What makes this difficult?
3. **Knowing His Voice:** How do you distinguish between God's voice and other voices (your own thoughts, cultural messages, well-meaning advice from others)? Share a time when you clearly recognized God's voice.

4. **Stranger Danger:** What "stranger voices" are you most tempted to follow instead of God's voice? (Examples: social media, cultural success metrics, fear, past experiences)

Part 2: Entering Through the Shepherd's Door

5. **The Exclusive Door:** Jesus said "I am the door" - the only way. How do you respond to this exclusive claim in our culture that says there are many paths to God? How can we communicate this truth with both conviction and compassion?
6. **Anyone Can Enter:** The sermon emphasized that "anyone" can come to Jesus - broken, confused, rejected, struggling. Who in your life needs to hear this message of acceptance? How can you share it with them?
7. **What We're Saved From and To:** Discuss the difference between being saved FROM something (penalty, power, and presence of sin) versus being saved TO something (God's care, provision, protection). Which aspect do you focus on more? Why?

Part 3: Experiencing Abundant Life

8. **Redefining Abundance:** The sermon challenged our typical definition of "abundant life" (more money, possessions, comfort). How does Jesus' definition of abundant life differ from the world's definition? What does abundant life look like practically?
9. **Abundant Life in the Valley:** The sermon stated, "An abundant life is not the absence of valleys; it's the presence of God taking you through the valleys." Share about a "valley" experience where you experienced God's presence. How did that change your perspective?
10. **Trust in Crisis:** Reflect on the story of the parents whose child took deadly medication. How does this story challenge or encourage you about trusting God with your greatest fears?

Key Takeaways

Write these down and discuss which one resonates most with your current season:

- Jesus knows me by name - my past, present, and future
- Jesus goes before me into every situation I will face
- I can only follow the voice I've learned to recognize through time spent with Him
- There is only one door to salvation and abundant life - Jesus
- Abundant life isn't about having more; it's about knowing, following, and trusting the Shepherd
- Even in the presence of evil and valleys, I don't need to fear because my Shepherd is with me

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge (Choose 1-2):

Option 1: Voice Recognition Practice

- Spend 15 minutes daily in silence, asking God to speak to you through His Word
- Write down what you sense God saying and test it against Scripture
- Share with the group next week what you learned

Option 2: Identify the Voices

- Make a list of the top 5 "voices" competing for your attention (social media, news, specific people, internal fears, etc.)
- Honestly assess: Which voice gets the most "air time" in your life?
- What needs to change for God's voice to be primary?

Option 3: Abundant Life Inventory

- Journal about this question: "What would abundant life look like for me if it's defined by Jesus' presence rather than my circumstances?"
- Identify one area where you're seeking abundance in the wrong place
- Take one concrete step to reorient that area toward Jesus

Option 4: Trust Exercise

- Identify your greatest current fear or worry
- Write out a prayer surrendering it to the Good Shepherd
- Each time the fear resurfaces, pray: "Lord, You go before me. I trust You as my Shepherd."

Reflection Questions for Personal Quiet Time

1. If Jesus called my name right now, would I immediately recognize His voice? Why or why not?
2. In what area of my life am I trying to be my own shepherd instead of following Jesus?
3. What "door" am I tempted to enter that isn't Jesus? (relationship, career path, lifestyle choice, etc.)
4. How would my daily decisions change if I truly believed Jesus offers me abundant life?

Memory Verse

John 10:27-28 - "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand."

Closing Prayer Points

- Thank Jesus for being the Good Shepherd who knows us by name
- Ask for grace to recognize and follow His voice above all others
- Pray for anyone in the group facing a "valley" experience
- Commit to trusting Jesus with your greatest fears
- Ask God to help you experience and share the abundant life He offers

Leader's Notes

Be Sensitive To:

- Group members who may be struggling with hearing God's voice
- Those facing genuine crises who need the truth about God's presence in valleys
- People who feel they've been following the wrong voices and may feel shame
- Anyone wrestling with the exclusive claims of Christ

Encourage:

- Honest sharing about struggles with trust
- Vulnerability about fears and worries

- Practical examples of how people recognize God's voice
- Testimony sharing about experiencing God's abundance in difficult circumstances

Follow Up:

- Check in during the week with anyone who shared a significant struggle
- Create accountability for the practical applications chosen
- Celebrate stories of people learning to hear and follow God's voice better

5-Day Devotional: Following the Good Shepherd

Day 1: Known By Name

Reading: Psalm 139:1-18

Devotional: The Good Shepherd knows you by name. Not just your given name, but the depths of who you are—your past failures, secret prayers, deepest desires, and greatest needs. Before you were formed in your mother's womb, He knew you intimately. This isn't casual knowledge; it's the profound awareness of a Creator who has numbered every hair on your head. When Jesus calls His sheep by name, He's declaring ownership, affection, and purpose over your life. You are not anonymous in the crowd. You are seen, known, and loved specifically.

Reflection: How does knowing that God knows you intimately change how you approach Him today? What fears or secrets are you holding back from the One who already knows them all?

Application: Write down three specific things about yourself—struggles, dreams, or fears—and acknowledge that God already knows them. Thank Him for knowing you completely and loving you anyway.

Day 2: The Shepherd Who Goes Before

Reading: Deuteronomy 31:1-8

Devotional: The battles you'll face tomorrow have already been surveyed by your Shepherd. He goes before you, not beside you—before you. This means every challenge awaiting you on Monday morning has already been seen by Jesus. The job interview, the difficult conversation, the medical test, the financial pressure—He's already there. Moses understood this profound truth: without God's presence going before us, even promised blessings become burdens. The question isn't whether you

can handle what's ahead; it's whether you'll follow the One who's already gone ahead and prepared the way.

Reflection: What upcoming situation are you anxious about? How would trusting that Jesus has already gone before you change your perspective?

Application: Identify one specific worry about your future. Each time it comes to mind today, pray: "Lord, You've already gone before me in this. I trust You."

Day 3: Recognizing the Shepherd's Voice

Reading: John 10:1-10

Devotional: Sheep know their shepherd's voice through time spent together. You develop your own language with God the same way—through consistent relationship. The more time you spend in His Word, in prayer, in worship, the more easily you distinguish His voice from the stranger's. God's voice often brings conviction that makes your flesh uncomfortable, yet simultaneously offers peace that surpasses understanding. It calls you to the impossible—forgive the unforgivable, love the unlovable, trust in the invisible. Meanwhile, the world's voices promise comfort but deliver chaos, offering thirty different paths when Jesus plainly says, "I am the door."

Reflection: Can you distinguish God's voice from your own thoughts or the world's messages? What "strangers" have been competing for your attention?

Application: Spend 15 minutes in silence today. Write down any thoughts that come. Compare them with Scripture to discern which voice you're hearing.

Day 4: The Only Door to Abundant Life

Reading: Acts 4:8-12; John 14:6

Devotional: "I am the door"—not a door, but the door. In our culture of endless options, this exclusivity sounds harsh. Yet it's profoundly loving. When thirty flavors overwhelm you with choice, one clear path brings relief. Jesus made salvation simple, not complicated. Anyone—the broken, the rejected, the confused, the former addict, the current struggler—can enter through Him. This door doesn't discriminate based on your past; it transforms your future. You're not saved because you're good enough, but because He is. The door isn't narrow because God is exclusive; it's narrow because only one sacrifice was sufficient for all.

Reflection: Have you been trying to create your own door to God through good works, religion, or morality? What does it mean to enter only through Jesus?

Application: If you've never entered through Jesus, today is your day. Pray: "Jesus, I enter through You alone. Save me." If you have, thank Him for being the only door you need.

Day 5: Life Abundantly in the Valley

Reading: Psalm 23

Devotional: Abundant life isn't the absence of valleys—it's the presence of the Shepherd within them. Jesus didn't promise you'd never walk through the shadow of death; He promised you wouldn't walk alone. An abundant life means you can lose your job and still have provision, walk through illness and still have hope, face your greatest fear and still have peace. Your cup overflows not because circumstances are perfect, but because the Shepherd is present. The enemy comes to steal your joy, rob God's plans, and destroy your faith. Jesus comes to restore, rescue, and resurrect. That's abundance—knowing that even in evil's presence, you will not be afraid.

Reflection: What valley are you walking through right now? How is Jesus offering you abundant life in the midst of it?

Application: Read Psalm 23 aloud. After each verse, pause and identify how that truth applies to your current valley. End by declaring: "The Lord is my Shepherd."

Closing Prayer for the Week: Good Shepherd, teach me to recognize Your voice above all others. Help me trust You enough to follow where You lead, even when the path doesn't make sense. Thank You for knowing me by name, going before me in every battle, and offering me life abundant—not through perfect circumstances, but through Your perfect presence. I choose to enter only through Your door and to remain in Your sheepfold. In Jesus' name, Amen.