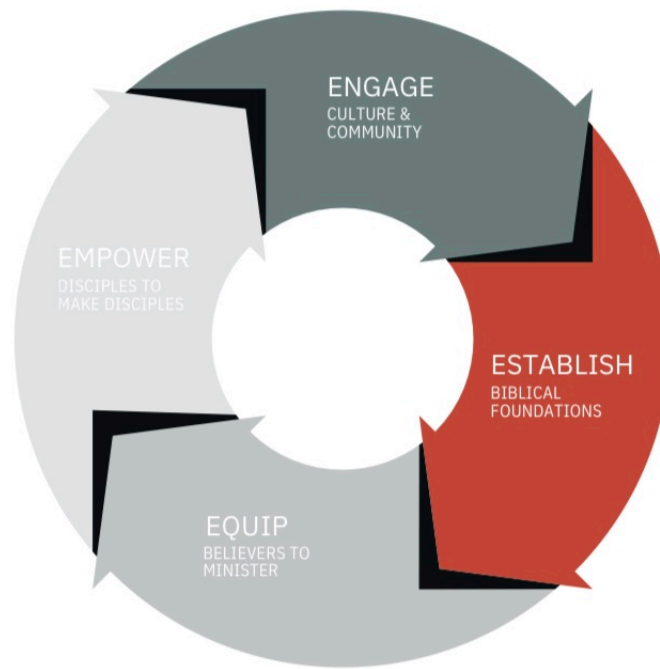


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and 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: Not a Better Life, But His Life

Series: Awaken to Believe

Scripture: John 1:9-18

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time asking God to reveal areas where you've been trusting in false light and to open your hearts to receive the life only Jesus can give.

Icebreaker

Share about a time when an "engine light" came on in your car (or life) that you ignored. What happened? What did you learn?

Key Takeaways

1. **Jesus stepped into our broken lives to take the life that we cannot save and invite us to receive the life that only He can give.**
2. **Jesus is the true light** - He's not here to manage your brokenness but to diagnose, heal, and rescue you completely.
3. **We must let go to receive** - To receive something from Jesus means letting go of what we're currently holding onto.
4. **Grace upon grace** - Jesus offers forgiveness, love, direction, and a new identity as children of God.
5. **Only Jesus qualifies** - He is the source of life, entered death voluntarily, absorbed our sins completely, and rose bodily for eternity.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **The True Light (v. 9)**
 - What does it mean that Jesus is the "true light"? What are some "false lights" competing for our attention today?
 - Why do you think John was so confrontational in calling Jesus the "true" light?

2. **Rejection and Reception (v. 10-12)**

- Why did people reject Jesus even though He came to His own? What does this reveal about human nature?
- What does it mean to "receive" Jesus? How is this different from just believing facts about Him?

3. **Children of God (v. 12-13)**

- What does it mean that we're given the "right" to become children of God rather than earning it?
- How does verse 13 emphasize that salvation is entirely God's work?

Personal Reflection

4. **Identifying False Light**

- When you're afraid, nervous, or excited, what do you naturally turn to first? (Consider: control, independence, success, relationships, substances, entertainment)
- How can you tell the difference between something that's genuinely helpful and something that's become a "false light" in your life?

5. **The Life You Cannot Save**

- The sermon stated: "Can you forgive your sins by yourself? Can you raise someone from the dead? Can you dictate where you go after this life?" How do these questions challenge our self-reliance?
- What areas of your life are you still trying to "save" on your own?

6. **Letting Go to Receive**

- The sermon used the flood illustration—what "furniture" or "couch" are you holding onto that Jesus is asking you to release?
- What would you have to let go of to truly follow Jesus? What makes this difficult?

Application

7. **Living in False Light**

- Share one area where you've been operating in "false light"—trying to find life, clarity, or freedom apart from Jesus.
- What broken system have you developed that "works for your brokenness" but keeps you from Jesus?

8. **Receiving His Life**

- What does it practically look like for you to receive the life Jesus offers this week?

- How can moving from "managing" your life to "receiving" His life change your daily routine?

9. Identity Shift

- The pastor shared about letting go of who he wanted to be as a pastor to receive who Jesus called him to be. What identity are you clinging to that Jesus might be asking you to surrender?
- If someone asked you "who are you," would your first answer be "a child of God"? Why or why not?

Practical Applications

Choose 1-2 of these to commit to this week:

Individual Practices

- **Diagnosis & Encouragement:** Spend 15-20 minutes in solitude with Jesus daily this week. Ask Him: "Lord, give me the diagnosis of what's really going on in my heart, but also give me the encouragement I need."
- **Identify Your False Light:** Complete this sentence honestly: "Jesus, I've been trusting _____ to give me life." Confess this and ask Jesus to become your true source.
- **Let Go Exercise:** Write down one thing you're holding onto that keeps you from fully receiving Jesus. Physically crumple the paper and throw it away as a symbolic act of surrender.
- **Gratitude for Grace:** Each morning this week, list 3 specific "graces" you don't deserve (oxygen, wisdom, health, provision, etc.) and thank God for His grace upon grace.

Group Practices

- **Accountability Partners:** Pair up and share one specific "false light" you're struggling with. Commit to checking in with each other during the week about surrendering this to Jesus.
- **Prayer for Non-Believers:** If anyone in the group is not yet a believer or is wrestling with fully surrendering to Jesus, take time to pray specifically for them.

Memory Verse

John 1:12-13

"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

Closing Reflection

Silent Reflection (2-3 minutes):

Ask the Holy Spirit: "What is one thing You're asking me to let go of? What is one thing You're inviting me to receive?"

Closing Question:

Will you receive the life that only Jesus can give?

Closing Prayer

Pray together:

- For courage to let go of false lights and broken systems
- For faith to receive the new life Jesus offers
- For specific needs and struggles shared during discussion
- For those who don't yet know Jesus as the true light

For Next Week

- Read John 1:19-34 in preparation for the next session
- Journal about areas where you experienced Jesus as "true light" this week
- Be prepared to share one way you practiced letting go and receiving

Remember: Jesus didn't come to give you a better life or tell you how to live your best life now. He came to give you HIS life.

5-Day Devotional: Receiving His Life

Day 1: The True Light Has Come

Reading: John 1:1-14

Devotional: Jesus is not one option among many; He is the true light that exposes all counterfeits. Just as a dashboard warning light alerts us to hidden engine problems, Jesus reveals what is broken within us—not to shame us, but to save us. The world offers many lights: success, relationships, self-improvement, even religion. But these are false lights that promise freedom while delivering bondage. Jesus alone is Alethinos—the complete, unveiled truth. Today, ask yourself: What false lights am I trusting? Where am I seeking life apart from Christ? The true light has come into the world. Will you turn toward Him and allow His light to expose what needs healing?

Day 2: Letting Go to Receive

Reading: Luke 9:23-25; Philippians 3:7-11

Devotional: Receiving new life in Christ requires releasing your grip on the old. Like a person in a flood clinging to furniture while a rescue helicopter hovers above, we often hold tightly to things that cannot save us—our control, independence, self-defined identity, or coping mechanisms. Jesus doesn't want to improve what you're holding; He wants to lift you entirely out of the flood. What are you still clutching that prevents you from being rescued? Perhaps it's a relationship, an addiction, unforgiveness, or the illusion of self-sufficiency. Jesus extends His hand today, but you cannot grasp it while your hands are full. Surrender isn't loss—it's exchange. You release what is dying to receive what is eternal.

Day 3: Children of God

Reading: John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:1-3

Devotional: You don't earn the right to become God's child—you receive it. This identity isn't achieved through effort, morality, or religious performance. It's a gift given to all who receive Christ and believe in His name. You were born once of blood and flesh, but Jesus offers a second birth—a spiritual birth from God Himself. This is who you truly are: not defined by your past, your failures, your achievements, or others' opinions, but by whose you are. You are a child of the Most High God. No demon in hell can touch you. No weapon formed against you will prosper. Today, practice introducing yourself differently: "I am a beloved child of God." Let this truth reshape how you walk through your day.

Day 4: Grace Upon Grace

Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10; Romans 5:6-11

Devotional: Grace is receiving what you don't deserve. Every breath you take, every morning you wake, every moment of clarity—unmerited favor. We were dead in our sins, yet Christ died for us while we were still His enemies. This is grace upon grace: forgiveness upon forgiveness, love upon love, mercy upon mercy. You didn't deserve that job promotion. You shouldn't have escaped that consequence. You could have been diagnosed with that disease. But God... These two words change everything. Stop taking His grace for granted. The very strategies you use to save yourself apart from Jesus are causing you to lose your life. Today, acknowledge one area where you've experienced God's undeserved grace, and respond with gratitude and surrender.

Day 5: Only Jesus

Reading: Acts 4:8-12; Colossians 1:15-20

Devotional: There is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. Jesus alone made you, entered death voluntarily, absorbed your sins completely, and rose bodily for eternity. At His name, every knee will bow—either now in worship or later in judgment. He is not a teacher among teachers, a prophet among prophets, or a system to use and discard. He is life itself. Muhammad remains in the grave. Ancestors remain ancestors. Philosophies remain ideas. Only Jesus conquered death. Only Jesus reconciles you to God. Only Jesus offers eternal life. The question isn't whether Jesus is qualified—He is. The question is: Will you receive the life that only He can give? Today is the day of salvation. Don't wait for tomorrow. Bow your knee now, confess with your tongue, and receive His life.