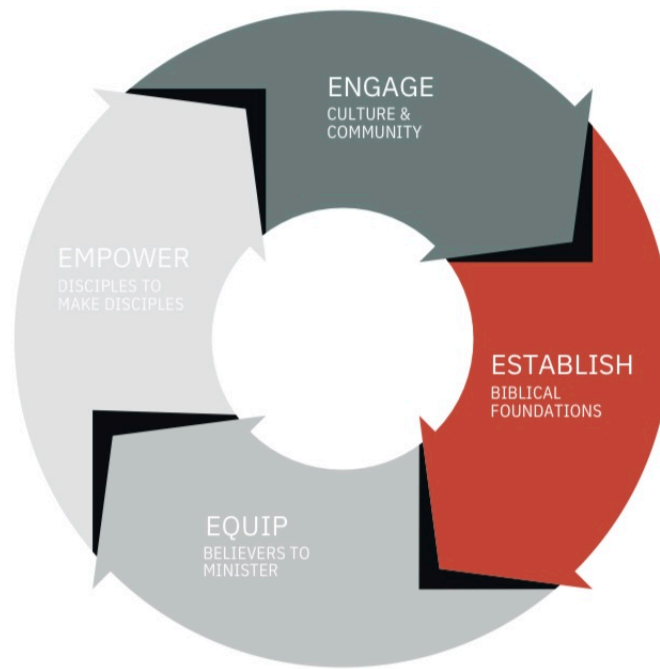


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and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

Based on John 11:17-27

Opening Prayer

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word, and to help group members honestly examine their beliefs about Jesus as the resurrection and the life.

Ice Breaker (5-10 minutes)

Share about a time when you or someone you know experienced an unexpected answer to prayer. How did that experience shape your faith?

Key Scripture

John 11:25-26 - "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?'"

Main Points Recap

1. **Death is a Problem** - We all face death, both physical and spiritual
2. **Jesus is the Answer** - He is the resurrection and the life
3. **A Response is Required** - We must believe and confess Jesus as Lord

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text (15-20 minutes)

1. **Context Matters:** Why is it significant that Lazarus had been dead for four days? What does this tell us about the situation Martha was facing?
2. **Martha's Faith:** When Martha said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died," was she complaining or expressing faith? What does her statement reveal about her understanding of Jesus?

3. **"I AM" Statement:** Jesus said, "I AM the resurrection and the life" (not "I teach about" or "I know about"). What's the difference, and why does it matter?

Personal Reflection (20-25 minutes)

4. **Where Do You Go?:** The sermon asked, "When your life stings like death, where do you go?" Be honest—where do you typically turn first when facing grief, pain, or disappointment? What would it look like to turn to Jesus first?
5. **"But Even Now":** Martha said, "But even now, I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." What "even now" situation are you facing? What would it mean to say "but even now, I know" in your current circumstances?
6. **Future Hope vs. Resurrection Hope:** The sermon distinguished between looking at situations through "future hope" (someday, later) versus "resurrection hope" (now, present). Where in your life might Jesus be saying "now" while you're saying "someday"?
7. **The Ultimate Question:** Jesus asks each of us, "Do you believe this?" How would you honestly answer that question today? What doubts or struggles do you have in fully believing Jesus is the resurrection and the life?

Application and Action (15-20 minutes)

8. **Choosing Life or Death:** The sermon stated, "If your hope is not in Jesus, you've chosen death. If Jesus is not your everything... you've still chosen death." What areas of your life are you still trying to find life in something other than Jesus? (Career, relationships, status, possessions, etc.)
9. **The Woman's Testimony:** Reflect on the story of the woman who lost her husband and two sons but still praised God. What does her response teach us about faith in the midst of tragedy? How can we cultivate that kind of faith before tragedy strikes?
10. **Blaming Jesus:** Do you ever blame Jesus for the brokenness in your life or world? How does understanding that we live in a fallen world, but Jesus is the solution, change your perspective?

Key Takeaways

- Death (spiritual and physical) is humanity's greatest enemy, but Jesus has defeated it
- Jesus IS the resurrection and the life—not just teaches about it or promises it for later
- True life is found only in Jesus, not in accomplishments, relationships, or circumstances
- Faith means believing Jesus can meet us in our "even now" moments
- We all must answer Jesus' question: "Do you believe this?"

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

1. **Daily Declaration:** Each morning, declare out loud: "Jesus, you are my resurrection and my life. In you, I have everything I need." Journal about how this changes your perspective throughout the day.
2. **"Even Now" Prayer:** Write down your current struggles or "death" situations. Next to each one, write "But even now, I know..." and finish the sentence with a truth about who Jesus is.
3. **Life Audit:** Make two columns—one labeled "Where I'm seeking life" and another "Where Jesus offers true life." Be honest about where you're looking for fulfillment outside of Jesus, then prayerfully surrender those areas to Him.
4. **Testimony Sharing:** Share with someone this week (believer or non-believer) about a time when Jesus brought "resurrection" to a dead area of your life.

Prayer Focus

Pray for one another in these areas:

- For those facing grief, loss, or "death" situations in their lives
- For honest faith to believe Jesus is truly the resurrection and the life
- For courage to stop seeking life in dead things and find it fully in Jesus
- For those who need to make a first-time confession of faith in Jesus
- For strength to worship and praise God even in the valley

Closing Prayer

Have someone close by praying that each group member would truly believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life, and that they would experience the abundant life He offers, even in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Looking Ahead

Next week, we'll continue in John 11 to see what happens when Jesus calls Lazarus out of the tomb. Come prepared to discuss what "dead things" in your life Jesus might be calling to come forth.

Additional Resources

- Read the full account: John 11:1-44
- Reflect on: Romans 6:4-11 (raised to new life in Christ)
- Worship song suggestion: "Graves Into Gardens" by Elevation Worship

5-Day Devotional: The Resurrection and the Life

Day 1: Where Do You Go in Your Grief?

Reading: John 11:17-22

Devotional: When Martha heard Jesus was coming, she immediately went to Him—not away from Him. In her deepest pain, she ran toward the Savior. Where do you turn when life stings like death? When your heart breaks, do you chase things that promise relief but deliver emptiness? Money, success, relationships, and achievements cannot heal what only Jesus can touch. Martha's response teaches us that authentic faith doesn't hide from Jesus in pain—it runs to Him. Today, acknowledge where you've been seeking comfort outside of Christ. Bring your grief, your disappointment, your unanswered questions directly to Him. He is not intimidated by your pain; He invites you into His presence with it.

Day 2: Even Now, I Know

Reading: Psalm 46:1-11

Devotional: Martha's words echo with remarkable faith: "But even now, I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." Even now—in the midst of death, disappointment, and delay. What is your "even now" moment? Perhaps you face a layoff, a broken relationship, a health crisis, or a wandering child. Martha models faith that doesn't deny reality but anchors itself in God's character despite circumstances. She didn't pretend her brother wasn't dead; she acknowledged both the pain and God's power. Today, complete this sentence: "Lord, even now in the midst of my _____, I know You are _____." Let this declaration become your anthem of trust when everything around you speaks of impossibility.

Day 3: Resurrection Hope vs. Future Hope

Reading: John 11:23-27; Ephesians 2:1-10

Devotional: Martha believed in resurrection—someday, at the end of time. But Jesus redirected her vision: "I AM the resurrection and the life." Not "I will be" or "I teach about"—I AM. Jesus wasn't offering distant comfort; He was declaring present power. Many Christians live with future hope, placing God's promises always on tomorrow's horizon. But resurrection life isn't just about heaven later; it's about transformation now. You have been raised with Christ spiritually today. The same power that will raise your body will resurrect your dead dreams, restore your broken relationships, and revive your weary soul now. Stop postponing what Jesus wants to do in your life today. What has Jesus spoken over you that you've relegated to "someday"? Believe Him for the now.

Day 4: Death Has Lost Its Sting

Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Devotional: Jesus could declare "I am the resurrection" because death never had authority over Him. Sin's consequence is death, but Jesus knew no sin. For those in Christ, death has lost its sting and victory. This isn't denial of suffering but confidence in ultimate triumph. The woman who lost her husband and two sons to gun violence understood this deeply—even in the hospital as the monitor flatlined, she asked for church right there. Her worship wasn't denial; it was defiance against death's claim to have the final word. You may be walking through your own valley of shadows today. The pain is real, but so is Jesus' presence. Death—whether physical, relational, or spiritual—does not get the last word in your story. Jesus does. Let this truth reshape how you face today's struggles.

Day 5: Do You Believe This?

Reading: John 20:30-31; Romans 10:9-13

Devotional: Jesus' question pierces through theology into the heart: "Do you believe this?" Not "Do you understand this?" or "Does this make sense?" but "Do you believe?" Martha's confession becomes the model: "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God." This is the response Jesus requires—not perfect comprehension but personal commitment. Today, you face the same question. Will you choose life or death? If Jesus is your "sometime thing," your Sunday routine, your cultural tradition, you've chosen death. But if He is your everything—your hope in grief, your strength in weakness, your life in the midst of death—you've chosen resurrection life. Answer Jesus today: Do you believe He is who He says He is? Your answer determines everything. Confess with your mouth, believe in your heart, and receive the life that not even death can overcome.