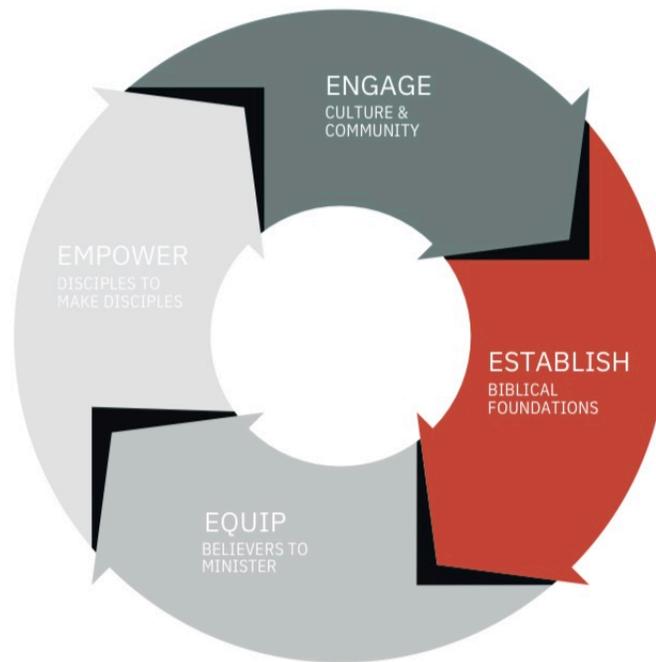


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and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

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by inviting the Holy Spirit to reveal areas where shallow belief may exist and to deepen your faith in Christ.

Ice Breaker

Question: Have you ever witnessed someone stand up for something they believed in with such conviction that it changed your perspective? Share briefly.

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. Jesus Reveals His Authority

- Jesus cleared the temple not in reckless anger, but with controlled, righteous indignation
- He made a whip intentionally—showing calm, purposeful action
- By calling it "my Father's house," Jesus claimed divine authority and identity
- He removed obstacles so people could worship God freely

2. Jesus Reveals His Identity

- He is the fulfillment of Passover—the Lamb of God
- He is the temple—the dwelling place of God among humanity
- He is the access point to God—no intermediary needed
- He is the ultimate sacrifice that ends all sacrifices

3. Jesus Exposes Our Hearts

- There's a difference between shallow belief and real faith
- Shallow belief: "I'll follow Jesus as long as it benefits me"
- Real faith: "For Christ I live, for Christ I die"
- Jesus discerns between those who believe in His name and those who truly trust Him

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **What surprised you most about Jesus' actions in the temple?** How does this picture of Jesus differ from how you typically think of Him?
2. **The sermon mentioned that Jesus cleared the "Gentile court"—the only place non-Jews could worship.** What does this tell us about Jesus' heart for those who feel excluded or marginalized?
3. **Read Psalm 69:9 and Malachi 3:1.** How do these Old Testament passages help us understand what Jesus was doing in the temple?

Personal Reflection

4. **The pastor asked: "What obstacle has Jesus removed from your life only for you to replace another obstacle in there?"** Take time to honestly reflect and share if comfortable.
5. **What are the current obstacles preventing you from worshipping Jesus freely?** (Examples: busyness, comfort, relationships, career, fear, control)
6. **On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your faith right now: shallow belief or deep trust?** What influenced your answer?

Application and Action

7. **The sermon distinguished between believing in Jesus' name (what He can do for you) vs. trusting Him with your life.** Which category best describes your current relationship with Jesus? Be honest.
8. **The pastor shared the story of the underground church where people had to choose to stay or leave when threatened.** If faced with a similar situation, what would your response reveal about your faith?
9. **Jesus' zeal for godliness cost Him His life.** What is your faith currently costing you? What might God be calling you to surrender?
10. **Read James 2:19 and Matthew 7:22-23.** What's the difference between knowing about Jesus and truly knowing Jesus? How can we ensure we're not just going through religious motions?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Obstacle Inventory

- Set aside 30 minutes to prayerfully identify obstacles in your life that prevent wholehearted worship
- Write them down and ask God to help you remove them
- Share your findings with an accountability partner

Option 2: Faith vs. Belief Audit

- Journal about these questions:
 - Am I following Jesus for what He can do for me, or because of who He is?
 - What would change in my life if I truly surrendered everything to Christ?
 - What am I holding back from God?

Option 3: Temple Cleansing

- Identify one area of your life that needs "cleansing" (schedule, relationships, habits, entertainment)
- Take one concrete action this week to remove that obstacle
- Report back to the group next week

Daily Devotional Focus

Spend time this week meditating on these aspects of Jesus' identity:

- **Monday:** Jesus as the Lamb of God (John 1:29)
- **Tuesday:** Jesus as the Temple (John 2:19-21)
- **Wednesday:** Jesus as our Access to God (Hebrews 10:19-22)
- **Thursday:** Jesus as our Authority (Matthew 28:18)
- **Friday:** Jesus as our Sacrifice (Hebrews 10:10-14)

Group Activity

Heart Check Exercise (10-15 minutes)

1. Give each person paper and a pen
2. Draw two columns: "Shallow Belief" and "Real Faith"
3. Honestly list behaviors, attitudes, or areas of your life in each column

4. In groups of 2-3, share one item from each column (only what you're comfortable sharing)
5. Pray for each other to move from shallow belief to deep faith

Closing Reflection

Before Communion (if applicable):

- Remember that communion is our Passover celebration
- The bread represents Jesus' body—the temple destroyed and raised
- The cup represents His blood—the sacrifice that removes all obstacles between us and God
- Come with a surrendered heart, ready to trust Him completely

Closing Question: *"Where is your heart today? Is it shallow belief or real faith?"*

Prayer Focus

Pray together for:

- Eyes to see Jesus clearly—in all His authority and identity
- Hearts that are surrendered, not just believing for benefits
- Courage to remove obstacles that hinder true worship
- Faith that trusts Jesus even when it costs us something
- Revival in our city marked by genuine, deep faith

For Next Week

Reflection Assignment: Come prepared to share one way you experienced Jesus removing an obstacle this week, or one area where you moved from shallow belief toward deeper faith.

Scripture to Read: John 3:1-21 (Nicodemus and being born again)

"Faith stands on what Jesus has already done for me. Shallow belief is looking for a sign for what he will continue to do for me."

5-Day Devotional: Clearing the Temple of Your Heart

Day 1: The Authority of Jesus

Reading: John 2:13-22; Psalm 69:9

Devotional: When Jesus cleared the temple, He wasn't having an emotional outburst—He was demonstrating divine authority. Notice how He took time to braid a whip, showing controlled, righteous anger. This reveals something profound: Jesus has authority over every area of your life because He owns it. He didn't ask permission to cleanse His Father's house, and He doesn't need permission to work in your heart today.

What "tables" in your life need overturning? What distractions have you allowed to set up shop in the sacred space of your relationship with God? Jesus clears obstacles not to punish you, but to create room for authentic worship. His authority isn't tyrannical—it's redemptive. Today, surrender an area where you've been holding onto control and trust His authority to bring order.

Day 2: Removing Obstacles to Worship

Reading: Malachi 3:1-4; Matthew 6:5-8

Devotional: The Gentile court was the only place non-Jews could worship God, yet it had become a marketplace—noisy, chaotic, transactional. Jesus cleared it so people could worship freely, without distraction. What a beautiful picture of grace: the Holy One stepping out from the inner temple to meet people in their "unholy" moments.

What obstacles have you allowed to crowd out your worship? Busyness? Entertainment? Even good things can become distractions when they replace intimacy with God. Perhaps Jesus has already removed obstacles from your schedule, relationships, or circumstances—only for you to fill that space with something else. Today, resist the urge to replace what God has removed. Instead, use that cleared space to worship Him in spirit and truth. Make Him the priority He deserves to be.

Day 3: The Sacrificial Lamb Revealed

Reading: Exodus 12:1-14; 1 Corinthians 5:7

Devotional: The Passover celebrated freedom from slavery through the blood of a lamb. When Jesus cleansed the temple during Passover, He was declaring, "I am the

Lamb you've been waiting for." No more need for repeated sacrifices. No more blood of animals. The final, perfect sacrifice was standing before them in flesh.

This is your access to God—not through rituals, locations, or religious performance, but through Jesus alone. You don't need a priest to intercede; Jesus is your High Priest. You don't need a temple building; His Spirit dwells in you. The forgiveness you seek, the freedom you long for, the relationship with God you desire—it's all available through Christ's finished work. Today, thank Jesus for being your Passover Lamb. Let this truth settle deep: His sacrifice was enough. You have complete access to the Father.

Day 4: Shallow Belief vs. Real Faith

Reading: James 2:14-26; Matthew 7:21-23

Devotional: Many believed in Jesus' name, but Jesus didn't entrust Himself to them. Why? Because He discerned their hearts. They believed He could do things for them, but they didn't truly trust Him with their lives. Even demons believe in Jesus and tremble—but that's not saving faith.

Shallow belief asks, "What can Jesus do for me?" Real faith declares, "Jesus, I'm Yours—whatever the cost." Shallow belief needs constant signs and blessings to stay committed. Real faith trusts even when circumstances don't make sense, when prayers seem unanswered, when obedience is costly. Examine your heart today: Are you following Jesus for what He gives you, or for who He is? Would you still worship Him if He never gave you another blessing? Real faith says, "For Christ I live, for Christ I die." Where does your heart stand?

Day 5: Surrendered Hearts at the Table

Reading: Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

Devotional: Communion is our Passover celebration—remembering the body broken and blood shed for our freedom. But before we come to the table, we must examine our hearts. Are we approaching with shallow belief or surrendered faith? The elements aren't magic; they're meaningful only when received with genuine devotion.

Jesus discerns hearts. He knows the difference between religious routine and authentic worship, between convenience-based Christianity and costly discipleship. As you prepare to take communion, ask yourself: What needs to be cleared from the temple of my heart? What shallow beliefs need to mature into real faith? What areas am I withholding from His authority?

The beauty of this moment is that Jesus doesn't reject honest hearts—even when they're messy. He cleanses temples. He removes obstacles. He transforms shallow belief into rock-solid faith. Come to His table today with a surrendered heart, ready to worship Him in spirit and truth.