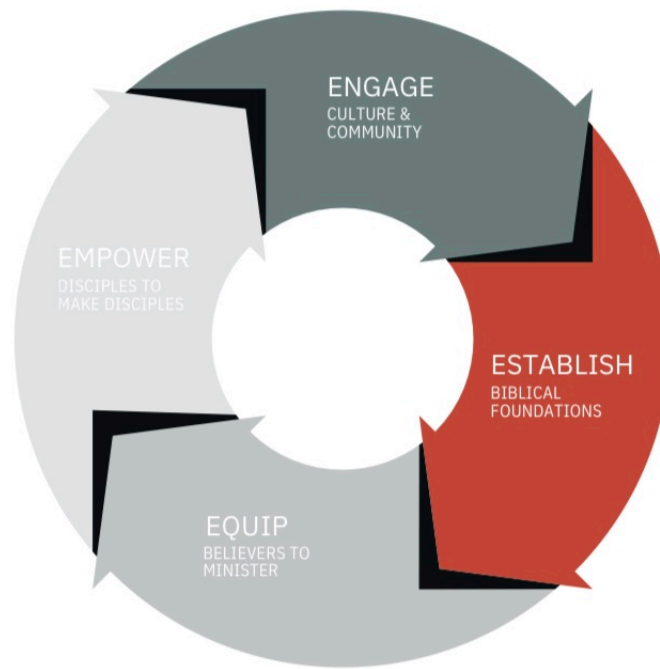


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and 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 teach 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 previous sermon to help lead your Koinonia Gathering, along with a brief devotional to help prepare your heart for next week's sermon.

Koinonia Gathering Guide

Series: God's Grand Story

Message Title: When They Don't Recognize God

Text: Esther 1

Main Idea:

When people don't recognize God, pride, ego, and chaos rule-but when we do recognize Him, we find purpose, love, and eternal security in His will.

Sermon Summary

The book of Esther never mentions God by name, yet His presence is unmistakably at work behind the scenes. In chapter 1, we meet King Ahasuerus (Xerxes), a man ruled by pride, ego, and impulse. His lavish parties, poor decisions, and toxic leadership reveal what happens when God is not recognized. In contrast, the story calls us to recognize God-not just by name but in how we live.

When we recognize God:

- We lay down our pride and live for His glory, not ours.
- We find boundaries that lead to life, not destruction.
- We love and lead others in godly ways rather than causing harm.
- We submit to His Spirit, developing new appetites and desires aligned with His heart.

Ultimately, the message invites us to abandon the pursuit of fleeting glory and recognize the eternal invitation to a different kind of party-life with King Jesus.

Facilitator Tips

- Be mindful of first-time guests or nonbelievers; Esther 1 is intense-help them see grace in the message.
- Celebrate moms during check-in-create space for a heartfelt moment of honor and encouragement.
- If the group includes men, highlight the call to godly leadership and spiritual responsibility.
- Allow for honest confession about pride, restraint, or recognizing God in daily life-model transparency.

Leader Notes

- Theological Thread: God's sovereignty is active even when He's not visible. Recognizing God changes how we lead, live, and love.
- Cultural Bridge: Like King Ahasuerus, today's culture celebrates ego and indulgence. Help your group contrast that with the Spirit-led life.
- Practical Insight: Encourage your group to evaluate the areas in their lives where God is 'unmentioned' yet should be 'center stage.'

Review Questions

1. What stood out to you most from the sermon?
2. Why do you think the book of Esther doesn't mention God by name? What does that say about how God works?
3. How does pride or ego show up in our lives today like it did in King Ahasuerus'?
4. In what ways do we struggle with lack of restraint (e.g. substance, ambition, relationships)? How does the Spirit offer a better way?
5. Who do you go to for counsel? Are they leading you toward God or away from Him?
6. What's one area of your life where you need to recognize God more clearly?

Practical Applications

1. Personal: Identify one area where pride has crept in. Confess it to God and ask someone to hold you accountable this week.
2. Relational: Husbands/fathers-evaluate how you're leading your family. Are you modeling Christ-like love and covering?
3. Spiritual: Fast from one indulgence this week and ask God to deepen your hunger for His Spirit.

4. Missional: Share your story this week with someone who needs to know that God is still working-even when it seems He's hidden.

Prayer Focus

- Repentance: Lord, forgive us for the times we've lived like You're not there.
- Renewal: Fill us with Your Spirit so we don't chase empty pleasures or power.
- Restoration: Heal our hurts and rebuild our families, marriages, and purpose with Your love.
- Reign: Jesus, we declare You King over our lives. Teach us to recognize You and submit to Your will.

5-Day Bible Study: When They Don't Recognize God

Day 1 – Recognizing God's Presence in Secular Spaces

Scripture: Esther 1:1–12

Focus:

God is at work even when He's not mentioned.

Reflection Questions:

Why do you think God's name isn't mentioned in the book of Esther?

Can you recall a time when it seemed like God was absent, but later you realized He was working behind the scenes?

How can you train your heart to recognize God's hand in unexpected places?

Prayer Focus:

Ask God to help you trust His sovereignty even when He seems hidden.

Day 2 – The Trap of Pride and the Call to Humility

Scripture: James 4:6; Psalm 10:3–4; Esther 1:1–8

Focus:

Pride blinds us to God's authority and inflates our own.

Reflection Questions:

In what ways do pride and ego try to rule your life?

How does our culture reward prideful behavior?

What does it look like for you to lay down your pride before God?

Prayer Focus:

Confess areas of pride and ask God for a humble, teachable spirit.

Day 3 – The Danger of No Restraint

Scripture: Ephesians 5:18; Proverbs 25:28; Esther 1:10–12

Focus:

A life without self-control leads to destruction.

Reflection Questions:

Where in your life do you struggle with restraint (habits, desires, indulgence)?

How does the Spirit help believers develop self-control?

What boundaries do you need to put in place this week?

Prayer Focus:

Invite the Holy Spirit to fill you and transform your desires.

Day 4 – The Impact of Godless Leadership

Scripture: Deuteronomy 17:14–20; Esther 1:13–22

Focus:

Leaders who don't recognize God often hurt those they lead.

Reflection Questions:

What does godly leadership look like in the home? In the workplace? In the church?

Who are you influencing? Are your decisions shaped by God's Word?

How can you be a leader who points people to Jesus?

Prayer Focus:

Pray for wisdom and humility in your leadership roles—especially within your family or community.

Day 5 – The Invitation to Recognize the True King

Scripture: Philippians 2:5–11; Revelation 19:6–9; Esther 1 (Review)

Focus:

Jesus is the greater King who invites us to an eternal celebration.

Reflection Questions:

How does Jesus' leadership and love differ from King Ahasuerus'?

What does it mean to recognize Jesus as King in your daily life?

How can you accept and extend the invitation to God's eternal party?

Prayer Focus:

Worship Jesus as King. Commit to following His ways and share His invitation with someone this week.