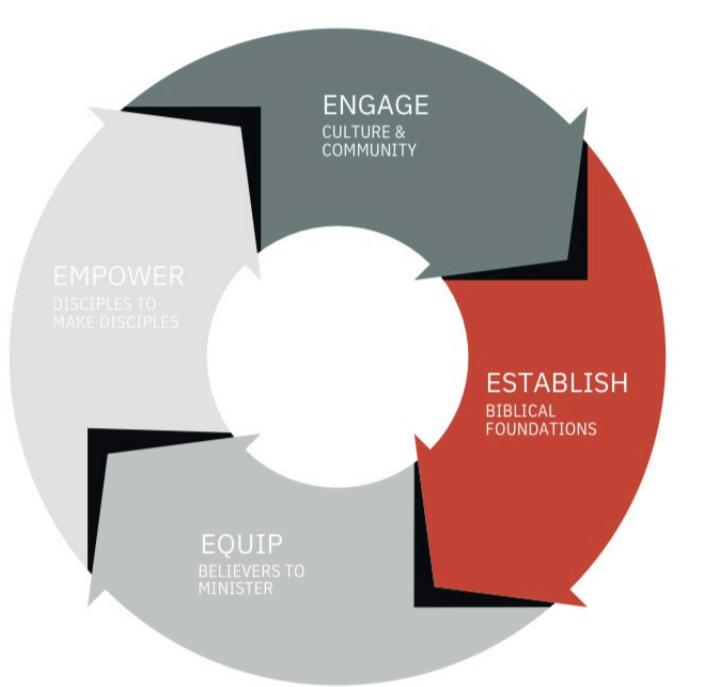


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and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

**Scripture: John 1:19-34**

### **Opening Prayer**

Begin your group time by inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your conversation and open hearts to receive what God wants to speak.

### **Ice Breaker**

**Question:** If someone asked you "Who are you?" right now, what would be your immediate response? What does that reveal about what you value most?

### **Sermon Recap**

This week we explored John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus as the Lamb of God. John demonstrated remarkable humility and clarity about his identity and purpose—he wasn't the Messiah, but the one preparing the way for Him. His life challenges us to examine our own identity, mission, and response to Jesus.

### **Discussion Questions**

#### **1. Identity in Christ**

**Read John 1:19-23**

- John was confident in who God called him to be, even when questioned by religious authorities. What shaped John's identity?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "Who are you?" Would your answer reflect how others have labeled you, your accomplishments, or what God says about you?
- What are some labels (positive or negative) that you've allowed to define you instead of God's truth?

## 2. Humility and Purpose

### Read John 1:24-28

- John said he wasn't even worthy to untie Jesus' sandals. What does this level of humility teach us?
- In what areas of your life do you struggle to point people to Jesus rather than drawing attention to yourself?
- How can we celebrate our gifts and accomplishments while maintaining John's posture of humility?

## 3. The Lamb of God

### Read John 1:29-34

- Why is it significant that John called Jesus "the Lamb of God" rather than using another title?
- How does understanding Jesus as our substitute sacrifice change the way we view sin and grace?
- For those who haven't surrendered to Jesus: What keeps you from receiving the gift of salvation? For believers: How does remembering Jesus as the Lamb affect your daily walk?

## 4. Missing Jesus in the Crowd

### Reflect on the Pharisees' response

- The Pharisees had been waiting for the Messiah for 400 years, yet they missed Him when He arrived. What blinded them?
- What are some modern-day distractions that can cause us to miss Jesus even when we're "religious" or in church regularly? (Consider: pride, agenda, status, comparison, busyness)
- Have you ever had a season where you were going through the motions spiritually but missing genuine encounter with Jesus? What brought you back?

## 5. Knowing vs. Revelation

### Read John 1:32-34

- John knew Jesus personally (they were relatives), but needed revelation to recognize Him as the Messiah. What's the difference between knowing about Jesus and having revelation of who He truly is?
- How can we move from head knowledge of Scripture to heart transformation?
- Share a time when something you "knew" about God became real revelation that changed your life.

## 6. Preparing the Way

### Read Matthew 28:19-20

- John's mission was to prepare the way for Jesus' first coming. Our mission is to prepare the way for His return by making disciples. How are you currently fulfilling this call?
- What would it look like for you to "prepare the way" in your workplace, neighborhood, or family?
- What obstacles or fears hold you back from being more intentional about pointing others to Jesus?

### Key Takeaways

1. Our identity should be rooted in what God says about us, not in our accomplishments, status, or others' opinions.
2. True humility points people to Jesus, not ourselves.
3. Jesus is the Lamb of God—the perfect sacrifice who takes away the sin of the world.
4. We can be around Jesus and still miss Him if our pride, agenda, or distractions get in the way.
5. There's a difference between knowing about Jesus and having revelation of who He truly is.
6. God is faithful to fulfill His promises—what He has spoken, He will do.
7. Our call is to prepare the way for Jesus' return by making disciples.

### Practical Applications

#### This Week's Challenge

Choose one (or more) of the following to put into practice:

## For Everyone:

- **Identity Exercise:** Write down how God defines you based on Scripture (beloved, chosen, redeemed, etc.). Place it somewhere you'll see daily and speak these truths over yourself this week.

## For Believers:

- **Humility Check:** Identify one conversation or situation this week where you can intentionally point someone to Jesus rather than highlighting yourself.
- **Prepare the Way:** Pray for one specific person who doesn't know Jesus. Ask God for an opportunity to share your testimony or invite them to church/a spiritual conversation.

## For Seekers:

- **Honest Reflection:** Journal about what keeps you from fully surrendering to Jesus. Bring these questions to God in prayer or discuss them with a trusted believer.

## For All:

- **Revelation vs. Knowledge:** Choose one Bible passage you've read before and ask the Holy Spirit to give you fresh revelation. Journal what God shows you.

## Prayer Prompts

- Pray for clarity about your God-given identity and purpose
- Ask God to reveal any areas of pride or self-promotion that need to be surrendered
- Pray for those in your life who don't know Jesus as the Lamb of God
- Ask for boldness and wisdom to prepare the way for Jesus' return
- Thank God for His faithfulness to fulfill His promises

## Closing

**Memory Verse for the Week:** *"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* - John 1:29

## Additional Resources

- Read the full account of John the Baptist's ministry in Matthew 3, Mark 1, Luke 3, and John 1

- Study Old Testament references to the sacrificial lamb system (Exodus 12, Leviticus 4, Isaiah 53)
- Reflect on Revelation 5:6-14 to see Jesus as the Lamb in glory

**Leader Tip:** Create space for both seekers and believers in your discussion. Some may be processing the gospel for the first time, while others are being challenged to live more missionally. Honor both journeys.

## 5-Day Devotional: Preparing the Way

### Day 1: Knowing Your True Identity

**Reading:** John 1:19-23; Isaiah 40:3-5

**Devotional:** John the Baptist faced intense scrutiny about his identity, yet he remained anchored in God's calling. When questioned, he didn't defend his position or boast about his influence. Instead, he pointed to Scripture and his God-given purpose. Today, consider how you answer the question: "Who are you?" Is your identity rooted in your accomplishments, others' opinions, or what God says about you? Like John, you are called to be a voice—not an echo of the world's expectations. Your worth isn't determined by status or accolades but by being God's beloved child with a divine assignment. Reflect on what God has called you to be, not just what you do.

### Day 2: The Humility of Purpose

**Reading:** John 1:24-28; Philippians 2:3-8

**Devotional:** John declared he wasn't worthy to untie the Messiah's sandals—the task of the lowest servant. His humility wasn't false modesty but a right understanding of his role in God's greater plan. True humility recognizes that our greatest accomplishments pale in comparison to Christ's work. Are you willing to decrease so Christ can increase in your life? Pride whispers that we must defend our position and prove our worth. Humility confesses that apart from Christ, we can do nothing of eternal value. Today, examine areas where pride may be hindering your effectiveness. Ask God to cultivate genuine humility that magnifies Jesus, not yourself. Remember: your purpose isn't about building your kingdom but preparing the way for His.

### Day 3: The Lamb Who Takes Away Sin

**Reading:** John 1:29-34; Isaiah 53:4-7; 1 Peter 1:18-19

**Devotional:** Throughout Scripture, lambs were sacrificed to cover sin temporarily. But John proclaimed Jesus as THE Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world—permanently. This wasn't about weakness but about God's perfect provision. From Genesis to Revelation, God pointed to this moment when the spotless Lamb would be slain for our redemption. Have you received this gift? The wages of sin is death, but God's gift is eternal life through Christ. You cannot earn it, achieve it, or deserve it—

you can only receive it. If you've already accepted this gift, have you grown complacent about its magnitude? Today, meditate on the costliness of your salvation and respond with renewed gratitude and worship.

## **Day 4: Revelation Beyond Recognition**

**Reading:** John 1:32-34; Matthew 11:25-27; Ephesians 1:17-19

**Devotional:** John knew Jesus personally—they were relatives who had done life together. Yet John testified, "I didn't know it was him" until God revealed it. There's a profound difference between knowing about Jesus and receiving revelation of who He truly is. You can know Scripture intellectually without allowing it to transform your life. You can attend church regularly without encountering the living Christ. The Pharisees studied prophecy for years yet missed the Messiah standing before them because their pride and agenda blinded them. Ask God for spiritual eyes to see Jesus clearly—not just as a historical figure or moral teacher, but as the Son of God, your Savior and Lord. Pray for fresh revelation that moves beyond head knowledge to heart transformation.

## **Day 5: Preparing the Way for His Return**

**Reading:** John 1:19-34; Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Peter 3:8-14

**Devotional:** John's mission was to prepare the way for Jesus' first coming. Our mission is to prepare the way for His return. John lived with intentionality, humility, and unwavering focus on pointing others to Christ. He didn't allow criticism, curiosity, or acclaim to distract him from his purpose. As believers, we're called to go and make disciples—to be voices in the wilderness of our culture, workplaces, and communities. Are you preparing the way through your witness? Jesus is faithful to return, just as He was faithful to come the first time. Don't miss your purpose by pursuing lesser things. Today, identify one practical way you can point someone toward Jesus. Your testimony, like John's, can awaken others to believe.