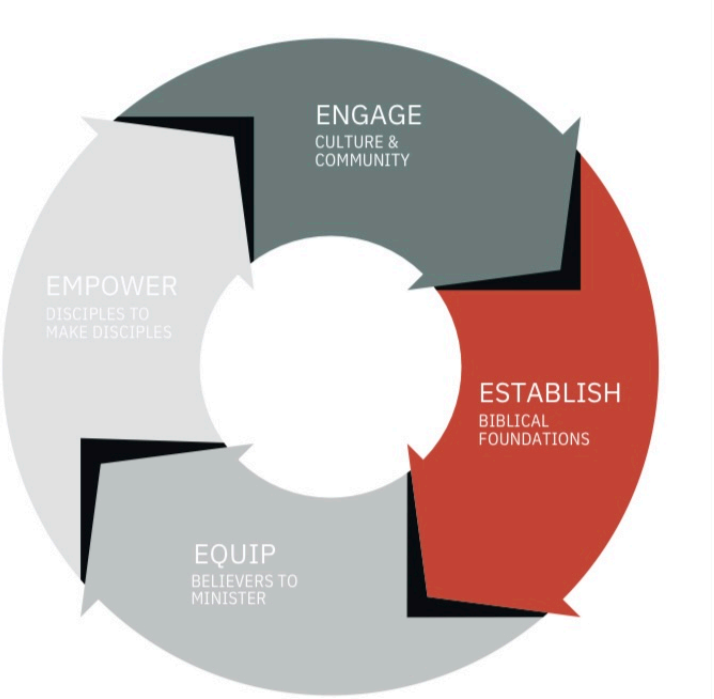
The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and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

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on John 14:1-12 | "When You Don't Know What to Do Next"

Day 1: A Place Prepared for You

Reading: John 14:1-3 — Jesus reassures his disciples that he is going ahead of them to prepare a dwelling place in his Father's house, and that he will return to bring them to himself.

Devotional: Following Jesus does not guarantee a smooth or predictable road. The disciples had left everything — careers, families, security — and now Jesus was telling them he was leaving. Confusion and grief filled that upper room. Yet into that anxiety, Jesus spoke with calm authority: do not let your hearts be troubled. He was not dismissing their pain. He was redirecting their focus. The same is true for you. Whatever has unraveled in your life, whatever expectation has gone unmet, Jesus has not abandoned the plan. He is actively preparing a place of rest and dwelling for you. Trust is not the absence of questions. It is choosing to believe in the one who holds every answer.

Personal Reflection: What situation in your life right now feels uncertain or out of your control? How does knowing Jesus is actively working on your behalf change how you carry that burden today?

Practical Application: Write down one area of your life where you have been anxious. Spend five minutes in prayer specifically surrendering that area to God, and thank him for the place he is preparing for you.

Day 2: The Only Way Forward

Reading: John 14:4-6 — When Thomas confesses that the disciples do not know where Jesus is going or how to get there, Jesus declares that he himself is the way, the truth, and the life, and that no one comes to the Father except through him.

Devotional: Thomas said out loud what everyone in the room was thinking. That is the gift of honest faith — bringing your real confusion before Jesus rather than pretending certainty you do not have. And notice that Jesus did not hand Thomas a map. He gave him a person. Himself. The way to God is not a system of rules, a religious formula, or a self-improvement program. The way is Jesus. When life does not go the direction you planned, when the road curves sharply and you lose your bearings, the answer is not a

new strategy. It is a deeper surrender to the one who is the way. You cannot get lost when you are holding on to the one who is the road itself.

Personal Reflection: In what areas of your life are you relying on your own direction rather than following Jesus as the way? Are there truths Jesus has spoken that you have been slow to accept because they conflict with what you want to believe?

Practical Application: Identify one decision you are currently facing. Before making any move, bring it specifically to Jesus in prayer and ask him to make his way clear. Commit to waiting on his direction before acting on your own.

Day 3: Living Truth in a World of Lies

Reading: Romans 1:25 — A description of those who exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped created things rather than the Creator. | Colossians 2:8 — A warning not to be taken captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy based on human tradition rather than on Christ.

Devotional: Culture will always offer you a version of truth tailored to your comfort. It will tell you to live your truth, follow your heart, and define your own reality. But if your truth contradicts the truth of Jesus, it is not truth at all — it is a well-dressed lie leading toward destruction. Jesus did not say he was a truth among many truths. He said he was the truth. Every idol, every competing philosophy, every voice that pulls you away from Christ is measured against him and found hollow. This does not make faith arrogant. It makes it anchored. When the world shifts, when culture redefines what was once settled, the truth of Jesus remains unmoved. Stand on it.

Personal Reflection: What cultural messages are you currently tempted to accept that contradict what Jesus has clearly said? Where have you allowed comfort or social pressure to blur the line between truth and deception?

Practical Application: Choose one area where culture and Scripture are in direct conflict in your daily life. Study what the Bible specifically says about that area this week and ask God for the courage to align your life with his truth rather than cultural expectation.

Day 4: When the Fire Is Hotter Than You Expected

Reading: Daniel 3:16-27 — Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are thrown into a furnace for refusing to worship an idol, and a fourth figure appears walking with them in the flames unharmed. | Psalm 34:18 — A declaration that God is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Devotional: No one signs up to follow Jesus expecting the furnace. You said yes to God and then watched relationships fracture, plans collapse, and prayers seem to go unanswered. You prayed to be more like Jesus and found that everything comfortable began to fall away. That is not abandonment. That is formation. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not come out of the fire alone. There was a fourth figure in the flames with them. When following Jesus leads you somewhere painful and unfamiliar, he does not watch from a distance. He enters the fire with you. The same Jesus who prepares a place for you also walks with you through the hardest places to get there. You are not alone in the heat.

Personal Reflection: What fire are you currently walking through that you did not expect when you first chose to follow Jesus? Have you allowed yourself to look for his presence in that difficult place, or have you only focused on the heat?

Practical Application: Reach out this week to one person you know who is going through a difficult season. Do not try to explain their suffering or offer easy answers. Simply be present with them the way Jesus is present with us in the fire.

Day 5: Greater Works and the Urgency of Now

Reading: John 14:12 — Jesus tells his followers that whoever believes in him will do the works he has been doing, and even greater works, because he is going to the Father. | Matthew 28:19-20 — Jesus commissions his followers to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them everything he commanded, with the promise that he will be with them always.

Devotional: The greater works Jesus described are not about surpassing him. They are about continuing him. His mission did not end at the ascension. It was extended through every believer who came after. You are part of that extension. The campus you walk through, the family you eat dinner with, the coworker you see every morning — these are your mission field. Jesus asked a piercing question through this sermon: if you knew he was coming back tomorrow, how would you live today? Who would you forgive? Who would you call? What account would you close? What conversation

would you finally have? The urgency is real. The greater works are waiting. You already have everything you need. Go.

Personal Reflection: Are you living with a sense of urgency about the mission Jesus has given you, or have you grown comfortable assuming there is more time? Who in your life needs to hear about Jesus, and what has been stopping you from telling them?

Practical Application: Write down the name of one person in your life who does not know Jesus. Commit to praying for them every day this week by name. Then take one concrete step toward sharing your faith with them — a conversation, an invitation, a text, or simply showing up consistently in their life with the love of Christ.

Koinonia Gathering Guide

"When You Don't Know What to Do Next" | John 14:1-12

Overview

This session is based on John 14:1-12, where Jesus speaks to his disciples during one of the most disorienting moments of their journey with him. Judas has just left to betray Jesus, Peter has just been told he will deny him three times, and now Jesus is telling the remaining disciples he is going somewhere they cannot follow. Into that anxiety and confusion, Jesus declares that he is the way, the truth, and the life. This guide will help your group explore what it means to keep following Jesus when life does not unfold the way you expected.

Key Takeaways

- Jesus spoke words of comfort to the disciples not from a distance, but in the middle of their confusion and fear. His instruction not to let their hearts be troubled was not dismissive of their pain but was grounded in the promise of his continued presence and provision.
- The image of a bridegroom preparing a place in his father's house was a familiar picture to the disciples. Jesus used that covenantal language to assure them that his departure was not abandonment but preparation.
- Thomas voiced what everyone in the room was probably feeling. Jesus did not rebuke him for the question. Instead, he responded by pointing to himself as the answer: the way, the truth, and the life.
- Jesus does not say he is a way among many. He says he is the way. This is an exclusive claim that calls every follower to evaluate what else they are trusting alongside him or instead of him.
- The greater works Jesus refers to in verse 12 are not about individual believers surpassing Jesus. They are about the ongoing mission of the church, the spreading of the gospel to more people across more places than Jesus reached during his earthly ministry.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. Think about a time when something you were looking forward to did not turn out the way you expected. How did that experience affect your emotions and your sense of direction?

2. The disciples had left everything to follow Jesus, and now he was telling them he was going somewhere they could not follow. Can you relate to a moment in your faith journey when following Jesus led somewhere unexpected or disorienting?

Going Deeper

3. Jesus told the disciples not to let their hearts be troubled, and then immediately pointed them to belief in God and belief in himself. Why do you think the remedy for a troubled heart is rooted in who Jesus is rather than in a change of circumstances?

4. Thomas said what the rest of the room was probably thinking. Is there a question about God or your faith that you have been hesitant to voice? What would it look like to bring that question honestly before Jesus and your community?

5. Jesus describes himself as the way, the truth, and the life. Which of these three is most personally meaningful to you right now, and why?

6. The sermon raised a challenging question: what truth about God might you currently be exchanging for a more comfortable lie? What makes certain lies easier to believe than the truth?

7. Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father, even after witnessing miracle after miracle. Jesus responded by asking how Philip could still not know him after so much time together. In what ways do you relate to Philip's request for more proof before fully trusting?

8. The sermon described the greater works of John 14:12 as the ongoing mission of the church rather than individual believers doing things more impressive than Jesus. How does that reframe your understanding of your own role in God's work?

Personal Reflection

9. Pastor Kevin closed with this question: "Am I currently following my way or am I currently following the way, which is Jesus?" Take a moment to sit with that question. Where in your life are you most tempted to follow your own way?

10. If you genuinely believed Jesus was returning soon, what would you do differently? What does your answer reveal about your current priorities?

Practical Applications

For Individual Members

- Identify one area of your life where you have been following your own way rather than Jesus. Write it down and bring it to God in prayer this week, asking for the willingness to surrender it.

- Spend time this week reading John 13:31 through John 14:12 slowly and in context. Pay attention to the emotional atmosphere of the room and consider how Jesus meets his disciples in that moment.

- Reflect on the bridal imagery Jesus used. What does it mean to you personally that Jesus is preparing a place and is coming back for his people? How should that shape the way you live today?

For the Group

- As a group, identify one person or one community outside your church that you could intentionally reach this month as an expression of the greater works Jesus described. Make a specific plan rather than a general intention.

- Practice honest community this week by sharing with at least one person in the group a question or doubt you have been carrying. Create space for one another to ask hard questions without judgment.

- Pray together for anyone in the group who is in a season where following Jesus has not looked the way they expected. Ask God to give them confidence that Jesus is still the way even when the path is unclear.

Closing Prayer Focus

Pray as a group over these three themes drawn from the passage:

- That God would settle troubled hearts in your group and anchor them in trust rather than in favorable circumstances
- That each member would have the courage of Thomas to bring honest questions to Jesus rather than pretending to have it all together
- That your group would embrace its role in the greater works, living with urgency and purpose as people who know the Bridegroom is coming

For Further Study

- John 13:31-38 provides the immediate context for everything Jesus says in chapter 14
- Matthew 11:27 addresses Jesus as the way in a synoptic context
- Mark 8:34-38 speaks to Jesus as the life
- Luke 10:22 addresses Jesus as the truth
- Colossians 2:8 warns against being taken captive by empty philosophy rather than Christ
- Romans 1:25 addresses the human tendency to exchange the truth of God for a lie