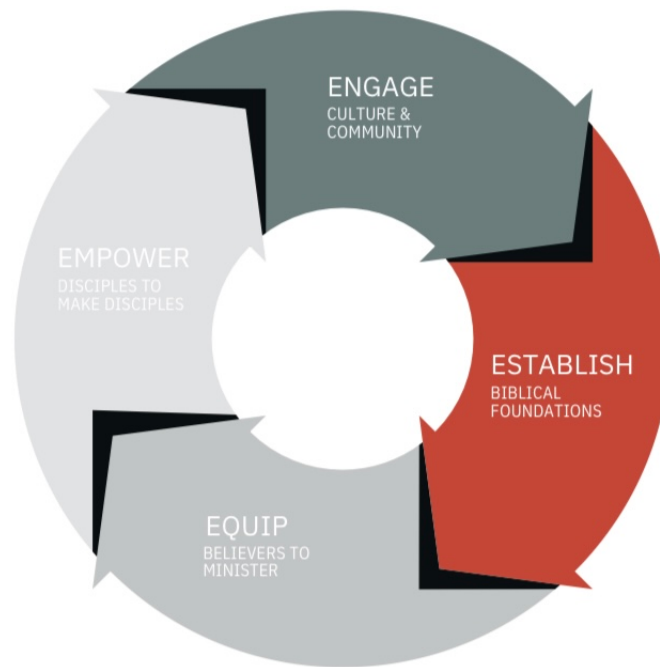


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and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

"Jesus Gives You What You Need" | John 12:12-16

Before You Meet

Encourage group members to read John 12:12-16 and reflect on one expectation they have brought to God recently that has not been answered the way they anticipated.

Key Takeaways

- 1. Jesus is not always the Savior King we expect, but he is always the Savior King we need.** The crowd expected a military conqueror. Jesus came as a humble, peaceful king on a donkey. His plan was always greater than what the people could see in the moment.
- 2. Our expectations of Jesus must be rooted in what he has promised, not what we desire.** Pastor Kevin drew a clear line between God's promises and our personal desires. When we confuse the two, disappointment and misplaced faith follow.
- 3. Jesus came to address the enemy within, not just the enemies around us.** The crowd wanted Rome removed. Jesus knew the deeper problem was the idol kings living in human hearts. External circumstances cannot be fixed by a king who has not first been given reign over the heart.
- 4. Stop placing God-sized expectations on finite human beings.** People in the church, in marriages, and in friendships will fail. Jesus never will. Failed expectations of people should never be allowed to define who Jesus is.
- 5. Present-day struggles are often only understood in hindsight.** Just as the disciples did not understand what was happening until after Jesus was glorified, we often cannot see what God is doing until we look back.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question *(to get the group talking)*

Think of a time when something turned out completely different from what you expected, but the outcome was ultimately better. What was that experience like?

Digging Into the Text

1. In John 12:12-13, the crowd waved palm branches and shouted "Hosanna," which means "save us now." Based on what Pastor Kevin shared about the historical context, what were the people actually expecting Jesus to do? Why do you think they expected that?
2. Pastor Kevin explained that Jesus responded to the crowd's expectations by riding in on a young donkey, fulfilling Zechariah 9:9, which describes a humble, peaceful king who brings peace to the nations. What does Jesus' choice of a donkey communicate about the kind of king he is? How does that challenge or encourage you?
3. Read John 12:16. The disciples did not understand what was happening until after Jesus was glorified. Why do you think understanding often comes after the fact rather than in the middle of a situation? Can you share an example from your own life?
4. Pastor Kevin said: "They wanted Jesus to exile the Romans, but Jesus knows they needed him to exile their sin." What is the difference between what we often want Jesus to fix and what he knows we actually need? How have you experienced that tension personally?
5. Pastor Kevin listed greed, lust, jealousy, money, and success as potential "idol kings" that can take the throne of our hearts. Which of these, or others not listed, do you find most quietly competing for your trust and devotion?

Going Deeper

6. Pastor Kevin said: "Stop allowing your failed expectations of man to define Jesus. Humans failed you. Jesus never has." Is there an area where a person's failure has caused you to pull back from God or from the church? How might separating those two things change your perspective?
7. Pastor Kevin pointed out that the crowd added "King of Israel" to their shout, a title that carried political and military weight. In what ways do we sometimes try to shape Jesus into the kind of king that fits our agenda rather than submitting to the king he actually is?

8. The sermon closed with a direct question: Is Jesus your Savior King? Not just a teacher, not just a good example, but the Lord of your life. How would you honestly answer that question today?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to practice before your group meets again.

Examine Your Expectations Write down two or three things you are currently asking God for or expecting him to do. Next to each one, honestly ask yourself: Is this rooted in a promise God has made, or is this a personal desire I have labeled as his promise? Bring your reflections back to the group.

Identify the Idol Kings Spend time in quiet prayer asking God to reveal any area of your life where something other than Jesus is sitting on the throne. Confess it, surrender it, and ask for help staying accountable to a trusted person in your group.

Extend Grace Think of one person who has let you down or failed your expectations. This week, make a deliberate choice to extend to them the same grace you would want given to you on your worst day. This may mean a conversation, a prayer, or simply releasing bitterness privately before God.

Look Back With Gratitude Identify one past season that was confusing or painful while you were in it, but that you can now see God was working through. Write it down. Share it with your group as an act of testimony and encouragement.

Declare Your King If you have never publicly declared Jesus as your Savior King, talk with your group leader or pastor about what that next step looks like for you, whether that is a conversation, a prayer, or baptism.

Closing Prayer Points

Guide your group to pray together over the following:

- Surrendering personal expectations to God's greater plan
- Releasing bitterness toward people who have caused disappointment
- Asking God to reveal and dethrone any idol kings in the heart
- Gratitude for a Savior King who is always what we need, even when he is not what we expected

"Jesus won't always be the king that we expect, but he will always be the king that we need." -- Pastor Kevin

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on "Jesus Gives You What You Need" — Rise Up Church

Day 1: The King Who Comes Differently Than Expected

Reading: John 12:12-16

Devotional: The crowd expected a warrior on a stallion. They got a humble king on a donkey. Their expectations were not wrong in their longing for rescue — they were wrong in dictating the terms of it. God's ways consistently confound human strategy. When life does not unfold the way you anticipated, resist the urge to conclude that God has failed you. He may simply be arriving differently than you planned. The disciples did not understand what was happening until after the resurrection. Trust that clarity often comes on the other side of obedience. Surrender your timeline and let the King reign on his terms.

Reflect: In what area of your life are you dictating to God how he should show up?

Apply: Write down one expectation you have been holding onto and consciously offer it back to God in prayer today.

Day 2: Hosanna — The Cry That God Hears

Reading: Psalm 118:25-26

Devotional: Hosanna means "save us now." It is not a polite request. It is a desperate, urgent cry from people who have run out of options. The crowd in John 12 was not performing a religious ritual — they were crying out from a place of genuine need. God does not require you to have it together before you call on him. He responds to honest desperation. The same God who split the Red Sea and brought his people through the impossible is the God who hears your cry today. You are not too broken, too far gone, or too late. Cry out. He is listening.

Reflect: What impossible situation in your life needs a "Hosanna" prayer right now?

Apply: Set aside five minutes today to pray with raw honesty, naming the specific thing you need God to intervene in.

Day 3: Desires Versus Promises — Knowing the Difference

Reading: Proverbs 3:5-6; Jeremiah 29:11

Devotional: One of the most spiritually dangerous things a believer can do is take a personal desire, dress it in religious language, and call it a promise from God. Proverbs 3:5-6 warns against leaning on your own understanding and calls you instead to acknowledge God in every direction your life takes. Jeremiah 29:11 reminds you that God's plans for you are purposeful and good, even when they do not match your blueprint. The pain of unmet expectations is often the pain of a desire that was never a divine promise. Learning to distinguish between the two is a mark of maturing faith.

Reflect: Have you ever confused your own desires for God's promises? What was the outcome?

Apply: Take one desire you are currently holding and examine it honestly against Scripture. Ask God to align your wants with his will.

Day 4: The Enemy in the Mirror — Letting Jesus Be King Over Your Heart

Reading: Romans 7:18-25; Galatians 5:16-17

Devotional: The crowd wanted Jesus to remove an external enemy. Jesus knew the deeper enemy was internal. Romans 7 captures the honest struggle of a person who wants to do right but finds something within pulling against it. The real occupation is not Rome. It is the idol kings that set up residence in the human heart — greed, lust, pride, and self-sufficiency. Galatians 5 describes the ongoing war between flesh and Spirit. Jesus did not come simply to improve your circumstances. He came to dethrone every competing king in your heart. True freedom begins not when your situation changes, but when your heart surrenders.

Reflect: What idol — success, comfort, approval, control — is competing with Jesus for the throne of your heart?

Apply: Identify one area where you have been living as your own king. Confess it specifically and ask the Holy Spirit to take authority there.

Day 5: Understanding Comes After — Trusting God in the Unclear Moments

Reading: Isaiah 55:8-9; Romans 8:28

Devotional: John 16 tells us plainly that the disciples did not understand what was happening in the moment. It was only after Jesus was glorified that everything came into focus. Isaiah 55:8-9 makes clear that God's thoughts and ways exist on an entirely different plane than human reasoning. Romans 8:28 does not promise that everything will feel good — it promises that God is working all things together for a purposeful end for those who love him. You do not need to understand every chapter to trust the Author. Some of what God is doing in your life today will only make sense when you look back from the other side of it.

Reflect: Is there a past season that confused you then but makes sense now? How does that build your faith for what you are walking through today?

Apply: Choose one current uncertainty and write a short prayer of trust, declaring that you believe God is working even when you cannot see it.