

ESTABLISHING RHYTHMS FOR MINISTRY & REVIVAL

The 4 E's—Ministry Jesus' Way

When we study Jesus' earthly ministry, we recognize four rhythms he used to establish thriving ministries. We've come to call them the 4 E's.

1. Encounter God—Assume God Is Moving

Throughout the Gospels (e.g., [Luke 3:21–23](#), [Mark 1:35](#)), Jesus makes sure to keep encounters with the Father at the forefront of his ministry from the get-go. His example points to a number of key reminders:

- We never bring God's presence to a place. He's already there.
- Our calling is built on a foundation of consistent encounter with God.
- We need to spend time asking questions like "What is God saying to me? To us? To my friends?"

Practices for Encountering God

- [Listening prayer](#) - we too often do all the talking during prayer, but like any relationship, it's so valuable to intentionally listen to what God wants to say.
- [Bible study](#) - God's Word is living and active and useful in equipping us for every good work.
- Spiritual Direction/Mentoring - God didn't intend for us to walk through life on our own. Finding a more experienced follower of Jesus to help disciple you can be life-changing.

2. Explore What God Is Doing—Never Stop

Jesus went about his ministry, fully confident that the Father and Spirit had already gone before him preparing the way. This is how he came across people of peace, individuals who were receptive to the good news of the kingdom of God. The rhythm teaches us that:

- "What's God doing here? Who's he leading us to? How are we connected to people and communities?" are questions that we're going to be asking a lot—for the rest of our lives! Because the Holy Spirit is *always* at work, and we want to always be ready to partner with him.
- As we explore a place and take time to learn its history, we'll discover pain, hurt, and trauma. We'll see the brokenness that Jesus wants to heal, and we can pursue repentance alongside members of the community, seeking a better way and freedom in Christ.
- As we get to know people, we can gauge their receptivity to God and gain a clearer perspective of the community through their relational networks.

Practices for Exploring What God Is Doing

- [Starting spiritual conversations](#) - discern where God could be at work as you build relationships and find out people's faith backgrounds.
- [Network mapping](#) - as you begin meeting people of peace, you can discern how you and they are connected to more networks of people and find ways to share Jesus with entire communities.
- [Prayer walk](#) - this is a chance to both encounter God and explore what he's doing on campus!

3. Empower People—It's Not about Recruiting

When Jesus began his ministry, he didn't just say, "Hey everybody, just stand over there in the corner. I got this!" Instead, he used his authority to empower others to join his ministry, demonstrating that:

- This rhythm orients us to the sending nature of God. We ask, “Who is Jesus sending? And what do they need to thrive?”
- We don’t get caught up in recruiting or “adding people to our club.” Instead, we seek to equip people with the encouragement and tools needed to reach out to their own relational networks.

Practices for Empowering People

- [Discipleship Cycles](#) - learn how to guide others as they apply God’s Word to their lives.
- Apprenticeship - intentionally come alongside the next generation of leaders and support them as they seek God’s calling.
- Shared leadership - follow Jesus’ model as he invited others into leadership roles and sent them out to reach even more people with the good news.

4. Establish Rhythms of Community—Discern the Design

Jesus demonstrated how life in ministry isn’t just one thing (i.e., ministers aren’t called to preach 24/7 with no breaks and no rest). He also showed how all the aspects of ministry are interwoven with community:

- As communities and groups follow Jesus, we discern together what regular rhythms and structures we need to preserve our fellowship and continue growing in Christ.
- Instead of settling for cookie cutter practices, we instead intentionally consider the unique needs and opportunities within our distinct community.
- We bring this question before God: “What communal rhythms do we need to thrive?”

Practices for Establishing Rhythms of Community

- Communal discernment - set a time to regularly gather (maybe once or twice a semester) to reflect on what rhythms seem to be working for your group and what may be a new rhythm that could better serve everyone.
- Student-led ministry design - though it may feel easier just having a campus minister lead the chapter, we’ve seen ministries thrive across the world, led almost exclusively by students.
- Reflecting on the E’s - review the other E’s (Encounter, Explore, and Empower) and brainstorm ideas for communal rhythms you could establish in your small group or chapter for each one.

So What Now?

We don’t want to just stop with head knowledge but instead dive into how we grow in our pursuit of these rhythms of ministry. So, take time with God to consider which of the 4 E’s come as natural strengths to you and where he’s calling you to grow (if you’re not sure, we recommend starting with Encounter God and Explore What God Is Doing).

Learn More

As you consider next steps and which of the E’s to focus on, here are some courses that can help:

- Encounter God
 - [Depending on the Spirit](#)
- Explore What God Is Doing
 - [Growing My Networks](#)
- Empower People
 - [Growing Disciples](#)
- Establish Rhythms of Community
 - Communal Discernment (Playbook course coming soon!)