

Awaken

The Lord is doing a new thing

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Session 4 Religion v Relationship & Positioned for Revival

Pre-reading:

Chapters 5 Religion v Relationship & Chapter 6 Positioned for Revival

Look Back

How are you?

What are you sensing God doing within you as we follow this Awaken series?

Look Up

Take some time to worship God together.

Here are some songs that would connect with the theme of relationship and revival.

- I will make room for you
- When the music fades
- I will build my life
- God of revival
- Father / Jesus / Spirit we love you
- Or you could use Psalm 2 to focus on the Lordship and Victory of Jesus. Read it together and then encourage people to imagine Jesus ruling in heaven over the nations. Out of this revelation ask people to pray prayers of praise and declaration to our King – or you could give people passages of worship from Revelation to read out to stimulate praise.

The Word

As you were reading these chapters of Awaken what really struck you?

Or: what sections of this chapter felt particularly relevant to your life or our situation in the church today?

Theme Introduction

To introduce the discussion you could play the Big Church Read Session 4 video from John or Anne for this session or you could introduce it using the following summary:

Chapter 5 contrasts religion with relationship, arguing that the church is built on one foundation: love for Jesus that overflows into love for others. Just as Jesus restored Peter (John 21:15–17), Jesus is “chasing down” failed disciples, rekindling wholehearted love, and commissioning them from intimacy into mission (“Feed my sheep”). Awakening, is being “awakened to love”: returning to first love and letting the Spirit pour God’s love into hearts so loving relationships become the environment of church life.

Family is God’s primary form of the church. The New Testament emphasis shifts from “disciple” language to that of the family, and the household (oikos) model that cultivated shared life, daily commu-

nity and devotion to Jesus. Church programs, hierarchies, and professionalised “corporate” patterns often hinder this love, producing shallow Sunday Christianity. The table is at the centre of church as family—meals, hospitality, and the Lord’s Supper—as a sacramental centre where belonging, reconciliation, and Jesus’ presence shape community. This family is an intergenerational community with spiritual parenting and a “family business” of kingdom work.

Chapter 6 presents awakening as repositioning for revival—moving from burnout, fear, and passivity into readiness, faith, and spiritual authority. Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones is the defining picture: despair is acknowledged, but not final. God releases revival through the Word and the Spirit, forming not just awakened individuals but a vast army. This awakening is missional and confrontational: the church is being mustered for spiritual battle, not against people but against the powers of darkness (Eph 6:12). The chapter emphasises intimacy before warfare. Revival flows from prayer, consecration, and humility—Levites and Nazirites devoted to worship and holiness. Finally, God is forming new relational networks (“a new net”), repositioning people by calling and geography, so that ordinary believers become rescue teams in a collapsing old church system—ready to save people, not preserve structures.

Read: John 21:1–19

1. In John 21, what do you notice about how Jesus restores Peter by asking him to express his love three times to cancel his three-fold denial?

What does that say about Jesus and how he restores his people?

And what might this mean for the church at this time about the need to return to our first love?

2. This takes place during a meal. How could “the table” (meals, hospitality, Lord’s supper) become more central to our discipleship and church community?

3. Where do you see a gap between your experience of the church and the call to love one another as Jesus loved us? (Do your Christian relationships feel more like friends in a club you belong to or a family sharing life together?) What would need to change for “family” to become real?

4. In the midst of this meal Jesus commissions Peter to his calling – to feed Jesus’ sheep. God is moving in younger generations and they will need authentic church family and spiritual parents to walk with them. Who could you intentionally “parent” spiritually (invest in), and who could “parent” you (support, model, challenge)? What would that relationship look like?

5. Awaken chapter 6 uses the image of Ezekiel’s vision of an army being resurrected to present the call to the church to be ready to engage in the spiritual battle, to love and pray to see people saved. What does it mean for the church to be a humble, loving army?

Looking Forward

1. What would “returning to first love” look like practically this week (a practice, a decision, a repentance, a conversation)?

2. Who is God calling you to in his rescue mission? And who can you do this with and live out authentic community with?

What is your next step?

Share next steps with one another and pray for God’s Spirit to strengthen and equip one another.

Next Session:

Remind people to read Chapter 7 “New Leadership” and Chapter 8 “New Wineskins”. Encourage group members to read it prayerfully looking for what God is saying to them and to come ready to share at the next session.