

Covenant Relationships Part 6
Congregational Membership
From The Heart of the Rabbis
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Congregational Membership -Why Membership Is Important¹

1 Corinthians 5:1-2

1Co 5:1 It is actually reported that among you there is sexual immorality, and such immorality as is not even among the pagans—that someone has his father’s wife.

1Co 5:2 And you are puffed up! Shouldn’t you have mourned instead, so that the one who did this deed might be removed from among you?

Such clearly defined principles for the removing of someone from the ranks of members in a Congregation shows that it must be preceded by the fact that there is such a thing as official membership.

There could not be such clear definitions in this passage if there were not rules regarding who is ‘In’ the local Community and who is “Outside” the local Community.

Formal Membership

The Internet Is Not a Congregation or a Community. We need to be connected to a local assembly of Messianic, God Fearing, Word

Teaching, Faith Walking people with Strong accountable leadership!

People may worship and participate in the activities of the Congregation but a clear distinction occurs in their attitude once they make a statement of commitment to membership.

Congregational Membership is not the formulation of a roster, but a calling forth of the commitment of covenantal integrity.

One aspect of covenantal relationships is that the parties involved make an effort to communicate and define what their relationship is.

What then does membership in a Congregation mean?

What comprises a Congregational Covenant? There are 8 Elements

Commitment to

- **Attendance**
- **Accountability**
- **Service**
- **Tithing**
- **Vision**
- **Leadership**
- **Loyalty**

Attendance

Attendance is the commitment to attend the worship services and any other scheduled meeting set up by the Congregation.

Gathering Together:

Hebrews 10:25

Heb 10:25 not forsaking our meeting together [*as believers for worship and instruction*], as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more [*faithfully*] as you see the day [*of Christ's/Messiah's return*] approaching. Amp. (Christ changed to Messiah by me)

¹ Covenant Relationships Keith Intrator; Destiny Image Publishers

Matthew 18:20

Mat 18:20 For where two or three are gathered in My name [*meeting together as My followers*], I am there among them." [Exo. 3:14] Amp

Acts 1:13-14, 2:1, 2:42

Act 1:13 When they had entered, they went up to the upper room where they were staying—Peter and John and Jacob and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; Jacob son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judah son of Jacob.

Act 1:14 All these with one mind were continuing together in prayer—along with the women and Miriam, Yeshua's mother, and His brothers. TLV

Act 2:1 When the day of Shavuot had come, they were all together in one place.

Act 2:42 They were devoting themselves to the teaching of the emissaries and to fellowship, to breaking bread and to prayers.

1 Cor. 5:4, 11:17-18,20 TLV

1Co 5:4 When you are gathered together in the name of our Lord Yeshua, I am with you in spirit. With the power of our Lord Yeshua,

1Co 11:17 But in giving you this instruction I do not praise you, for when you meet together it does more harm than good.

1Co 11:18 For first of all, when you come together as Messiah's community, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it—

1Co 11:20 Therefore, when you meet together in the same place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper—

Key: Meeting together!

Gathering Together

1 Cor. 14:26 TLV

1Co 14:26 What is it then, brothers and sisters?

Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

A person grows spiritually by making a firm commitment to one Congregation/Community

Congregation hoping is a lack of understanding of covenant.

Real spiritual strength will come when one finds his God-given placement and grows in commitment and covenant with people there.

Accountability

People do not like commitment because they do not like accountability.

Accountability= Answerability

We are not THE LONE RANGER or on a SOLO mission

We are part of a "Body" of Grafted In people to the Covenant of Israel and to each other. Answerable to YHWH and to one another

First, we are to be answerable to one another as regarding our holiness of life and our persistence or perseverance in faith and repentance.

Sin not only affects one person but the whole body

Hebrews 3:12-14 TLV

Heb 3:12 Take care, brothers and sisters, that none of you has an evil heart of unbelief that falls away from the living God.

Heb 3:13 But encourage one another day by day—as long as it is called "Today"—so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Heb 3:14 For we have become partners of Messiah, if we hold our original conviction firm until the end.

1 Thes. 5:11 TLV

1Th 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up—just as you in fact are doing.

Hebrews 10:23-25 TLV

Heb 10:23 Let us hold fast the unwavering confession of hope, for He who promised is faithful.

Heb 10:24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good deeds.

Heb 10:25 And do not neglect our own meetings, as is the habit of some, but encourage one another—and all the more so as you see the Day approaching.

We together are Messiah's Bride, we are Messiah's Body- together we bear witness to YHWH before the world.

Secondly-Bearing one another's burdens. We can not bear each others burdens if there is no commitment to one another.

Gal 6:1-2 TLV

Gal 6:1 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught doing something wrong, you who are directed by the Ruach, restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness—looking closely at yourself so you are not tempted also.

Gal 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you fulfill the Torah of Messiah.

Thirdly it is important regarding life's decisions. No Man Is An Island – We need each other.

Proverbs 11:14 AMP

Pro 11:14 Where there is no [*wise, intelligent*] guidance, the people fall [*and go off course like a ship without a helm*], But in the abundance of [*wise and godly*] counselors there is victory.

Proverbs 12:15 AMP

Pro 12:15 The way of the [*arrogant*] fool [*who rejects God's wisdom*] is right in his own eyes, But a wise and prudent man is he who listens to counsel.

[Pro. 3:7; Pro. 9:9; Pro. 21:2]

Proverbs 13:10 AMP

Pro 13:10 Through pride and presumption come

nothing but strife, But [*skillful and godly*] wisdom is with those who welcome [*well-advised*] counsel.

Proverbs 15:22 AMP

Pro 15:22 Without consultation and wise advice, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they are established and succeed.

Service

Every member of the Congregation should have an area of practical service. In a Community everyone helps out.

The seizing hold of responsibility for service lends itself toward covenantal strength.

If members are helping and serving; the Pastor/Rabbi will be freed for more time of prayer, study and evangelism.

Serving One Another – We all have a job to do within the local Community of Believers.

Matthew 9:37-38 TLV

Mat 9:37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

Mat 9:38 Therefore pray to the Lord of the harvest that He may send out workers into His harvest field."

John 4:35-38 TLV

Joh 4:35 Don't you say, 'Four more months, and then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields! They are white and ready for harvest.

Joh 4:36 "The reaper receives a reward and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper may rejoice together.

Joh 4:37 For the saying is true, 'One sows and another reaps.'

Joh 4:38 I sent you to reap what you haven't worked for. Others have worked hard, and you have joined in their work."

1 Thess. 5:17-18 TLV

1Th 5:14 We urge you, brothers and sisters, correct the unruly, comfort the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

1Th 5:15 See that no one repays evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good for one another and for all.

1Th 5:16 Rejoice always,

1Th 5:17 pray constantly,

1Th 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Messiah Yeshua.

1Th 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit,

1Th 5:20 do not despise prophetic messages,

1Th 5:21 but test all things, hold fast to what is good,

1Th 5:22 keep away from every kind of evil.

Tithing

Each person should be committed to a major, regular, undesignated giving of finances into the budget of the Congregation.

Proverbs 3:9 AMP

Pro 3:9 Honor the LORD with your wealth And with the first fruits of all your crops (income); [Deu. 26:2; Mal. 3:10; Luke 14:13-14]

Pro 3:10 Then your barns will be abundantly filled And your vats will overflow with new wine. [Deu. 28:8]

We worship God with our substance

Tithing is 10% of ones income (Gross) to the Congregation. There are difference areas of giving, but the tithe is first

Alms – Matthew 6:3 – to help the poor

Offerings – Free will offerings-can be to other ministries

Tithes – Go to the Congregation where you are a member- Malachi 3:10

The tithe is an open step of Congregational Commitment

The tithe is the expression of the belief that our money belongs to God and is willingly yielded to the general purpose of His Kingdom.

A designated gift implies that it is a free-will offering above the tithe – i.e. outreach, benevolent fund, building fund

The purpose of the tithe is to support the normal functions and budgetary needs of the local worship and teaching center. i.e. Congregation

In the Law of Moses, the tithe was given to support the local Levites who were in charge of teaching and worship.

Giving money is related to one's heart commitment. If one is committed to a cause, he will give to it.

Giving money into the Kingdom of God is an expression of heart commitment. It is also a means to exercise dominion over the attacks of greed or fear of financial insecurity. When one give money, his potential to believe to receive money increases.

Luke 6:38 AMP

Luk 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure--pressed down, shaken together, and running over [*with no space left for more*]. For with the standard of measurement you use [*when you do good to others*], it will be measured to you in return."

Deut 8:18 AMP

Deu 8:18 But you shall remember [*with profound respect*] the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore (solemnly promised) to your fathers, as it is this day.

Mark 10:29-30 TLV

Mar 10:29 "Amen, I tell you," Yeshua replied, "there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for My sake and for the sake of the Good News,

Mar 10:30 who will not receive a hundred times as much now in this time, houses and brothers and

sisters and mothers and children and property, along with persecutions; and in the olam ha-ba, eternal life.

Mar 10:31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

Giving increases our dependence on God

Vision

Another aspect of membership in the Congregation is commitment to the vision

The member should be sure that he understands the vision of the Congregation and that he is called by God to help support that vision.

In ancient Israel the people gathered around the “Banner” of their particular “Tribe”. The banner was a symbol that represented the calling and identity of that particular tribe.

Leadership

Hebrews 13:17 TLV

Heb 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as ones who must give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no benefit to you.

Ephesians 4: 11-16 TLV

Eph 4:11 He Himself gave some to be emissaries, some as prophets, some as proclaimers of the Good News, and some as shepherds and teachers—

Eph 4:12 to equip the kedoshim for the work of service, for building up the body of Messiah.

Eph 4:13 This will continue until we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of Ben-Elohim—to mature adulthood, to the measure of the stature of Messiah’s fullness.

Eph 4:14 As a result, we are no longer to be like children, tossed around by the waves and blown all over by every wind of teaching, by the trickery of men with cunning in deceitful scheming.

Eph 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we are

to grow up in all ways into Messiah, who is the Head.

Eph 4:16 From Him the whole body is fitted and held together by every supporting ligament. The proper working of each individual part produces the body’s growth, for building itself up in love.

The next area of Congregational membership is a receptivity to the authority, anointing and counsel of the Congregational Pastors/Rabbi’s and Elders

The Pastors/Elders are the primary governing Body of the Congregation

The Head of the Elders is the Pastor/Rabbi

From the Pastor’s through the Elders there should be a flow of spiritual unity through the Congregation.

The role of leadership is to do the equipping (the are the trainers) of the members (the trainees) to do the work of the ministry.

A member must be one who desires to serve the Kingdom of God.

Joining the membership of the Congregation is a statement that one wants to enter the work of the ministry

Ephesians 4:16

The body is joined and knit together. There must be a linking of each one of the members between themselves.

A commitment to membership is a commitment to be joined. It is a commitment to be knit, linked and bound together.

Membership is not passive, it is taking up of active participation where the whole group can benefit

The participation will cause the ‘Growth of the Body’.

Membership is a commitment to cause the growth to of the Congregation

Commitment to growth comes when

- One helps with evangelism to see the members of the Congregation grow
- One participates in prayer and worship to see the spiritual quality of the community grow
- Invites others to come to the Congregation

Membership is a commitment to see oneself built up to one's highest capacity to love others

We are all growing strong together

We contribute to the peace and unity of the spiritual community

Calling & Comfort

Congregational Membership must be seen as a calling of God. It is not the same thing as picking out a restaurant.

The question is NOT "Where do I want to go fellowship" it is rather, "What has God called be to do and Where has God called me to make a commitment"?

We do not seek out the place where we might feel the most comfortable. We seek out the place that God has ordained for our participation.

"Ask not what your Congregation can do for you, but ask what can I do to be a blessing to the Congregation"

Loyalty

Membership means loyalty to your Congregation and Leaders. Unfortunately Loyalty has become a forgotten principle. Very few people who call themselves Messianic Believers practice this principle. They are quick to turn against leadership, judge them harshly and are quick to desert them in times of need. How do I know this? Because we have experienced it first hand in our Ministry.

Membership loyalty means that you are watching out for the wolves who would try to scatter the sheep and attack the Shepherd. How sad that in most cases, those who are members side with the wolves and attack the Shepherd who is trying to watch out for their souls.

Membership means putting the meetings of the Congregation before other meetings of nonmembers.

Not forsaking the assembly of ourselves together – with those whom we have a Covenant relationship with

Proverbs 27:10 AMP

Pro 27:10 Do not abandon your own friend and your father's friend, And do not go to your brother's house in the day of your disaster. Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother who is far away.

Acts 2:42

Act 2:42 They were devoting themselves to the teaching of the emissaries and to fellowship, to breaking bread and to prayers.

Proverbs 18:24 Amp

Pro 18:24 The man of many friends [*a friend of all the world*] will prove himself a bad friend, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Eph 4:10 - 32 CJB

Eph 4:10 The one who went down is himself the one who also went up, far above all of heaven, in order to fill all things.

Eph 4:11 Furthermore, he gave some people as emissaries, some as prophets, some as proclaimers of the Good News, and some as shepherds and teachers.

Eph 4:12 Their task is to equip God's people for the work of service that builds the body of the Messiah,

Eph 4:13 until we all arrive at the unity implied by trusting and knowing the Son of God, at full manhood, at the standard of maturity set by the Messiah's perfection.

Eph 4:14 We will then no longer be infants tossed about by the waves and blown along by every wind

of teaching, at the mercy of people clever in devising ways to deceive.

Eph 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in every respect grow up into him who is the head, the Messiah.

Eph 4:16 Under his control, the whole body is being fitted and held together by the support of every joint, with each part working to fulfill its function; this is how the body grows and builds itself up in love.

Eph 4:17 Therefore I say this—indeed, in union with the Lord I insist on it: do not live any longer as the pagans live, with their sterile ways of thinking.

Eph 4:18 Their intelligence has been shrouded in darkness, and they are estranged from the life of God, because of the ignorance in them, which in turn comes from resisting God's will.

Eph 4:19 They have lost all feeling, so they have abandoned themselves to sensuality, practicing any kind of impurity and always greedy for more.

Eph 4:20 But this is not the lesson you learned from the Messiah!

Eph 4:21 If you really listened to him and were instructed about him, then you learned that since what is in Yeshua is truth,

Eph 4:22 then, so far as your former way of life is concerned, you must strip off your old nature, because your old nature is thoroughly rotted by its deceptive desires;

Eph 4:23 and you must let your spirits and minds keep being renewed,

Eph 4:24 and clothe yourselves with the new nature created to be godly, which expresses itself in the righteousness and holiness that flow from the truth.

Eph 4:25 Therefore, stripping off falsehood, let everyone speak truth with his neighbor, because we are intimately related to each other as parts of a body.

Eph 4:26 Be angry, but don't sin—don't let the sun go down before you have dealt with the cause of your anger;

Eph 4:27 otherwise you leave room for the Adversary.

Eph 4:28 The thief must stop stealing; instead, he should make an honest living by his own efforts. This way he will be able to share with those in need.

Eph 4:29 Let no harmful language come from your

mouth, only good words that are helpful in meeting the need, words that will benefit those who hear them.

Eph 4:30 Don't cause grief to God's Ruach HaKodesh, for he has stamped you as his property until the day of final redemption.

Eph 4:31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, violent assertiveness and slander, along with all spitefulness.

Eph 4:32 Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted; and forgive each other, just as in the Messiah God has also forgiven you.

Proverbs 17:17 TLV

Pro 17:17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Proverbs 27:17 TLV

Pro 27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so a person sharpens the countenance of his friend.

We cannot fulfill our purpose in the Body of Messiah unless we are connected to the Body of Messiah Locally.

The gifts God put within us and only be used to their fullest potential, when we are connected to a local Body of Believers.

Your gifts are not for you, but for you to share with others, which only comes from being a member of a local Body of Torah Observant, Yeshua following talmidim.