



THE WAY OF MESSIAH
MESSIANIC CONGREGATION

Yitro/Jethro – Helping Hands Exodus 18:1-27

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Helping Hands For Leadership To Help Carry The Burden

Parshah Overview: ¹

Moses' father-in-law, **Jethro**, hears of the great **miracles** which G-d performed for the people of Israel, and comes from Midian to the Israelite camp, bringing with him Moses' wife and two sons. Jethro advises Moses to appoint a hierarchy of **magistrates and judges** to assist him in the task of governing and administering justice to the people.

The children of Israel camp opposite **Mount Sinai**, where they are told that G-d has **chosen** them to be His "kingdom of priests" and "holy nation." The people respond by proclaiming, "All that G-d has spoken, we shall **do**."

On the sixth day of the third month (Sivan), seven weeks after the **Exodus**, the entire nation of Israel assembles at the foot of Mount Sinai. G-d **descends** on the mountain amidst thunder, lightning, billows of smoke and the blast of the *shofar*, and summons Moses to **ascend**. G-d proclaims the **Ten Commandments**, commanding the people of Israel to believe in **G-d**, not to worship **idols** or take G-d's **name** in vain, to keep the **Shabbat**, honor their **parents**, not to **murder**, not to commit **adultery**, not to **steal**, and not to bear false **witness** or **covet** another's property. The people cry out to Moses that the revelation is too intense for them to bear, begging him to receive the **Torah** from G-d and convey it to them.

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Wisdom From Yitro/Jethro

Exo 18:1 Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and Moses' father-in-law, heard about everything God had done for Moses and for His people Israel, and how Adonai had brought Israel out of Egypt. (

Exo 18:2 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken in Moses' wife Zipporah, after he had sent her away

Exo 18:3 with her two sons. One was named Gershom because he said, "I have been an outsider in a foreign land,"

Exo 18:4 and the name of the other was Eliezer because he said, "For my father's God is my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.")

Exo 18:5 So Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses into the wilderness where he was encamped at the mountain of God.

Exo 18:6 He had told Moses, "I, Jethro your father-in-law, am coming to you, along with your wife and her two sons."

Exo 18:7 So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, then bowed down and kissed him. They asked each other about their welfare, and went into the tent.

Exo 18:8 Moses told his father-in-law all that Adonai had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, as well as all the travail that had come upon them along the way, and how Adonai delivered them.

Exo 18:9 Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness that Adonai had shown to Israel, since He had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

Exo 18:10 Jethro said, "Blessed be Adonai, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.

Exo 18:11 Now I know that Adonai is greater than all gods, since they had acted arrogantly against them."

Exo 18:12 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, presented a burnt offering and sacrifices to God. Aaron also came along with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

Exo 18:13 The next day, Moses sat to judge the people, and they stood around Moses from morning till evening.

Exo 18:14 When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What's this you're doing to the people? Why sit by yourself, alone, with all the people standing around from morning until evening?"

Exo 18:15 Moses answered his father-in-law, "It's because the people come to me to inquire of God.

Exo 18:16 When they have an issue, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor, so I make them understand God's statutes and His laws."

Exo 18:17 But Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you're doing is no good.

Exo 18:18 You will surely wear yourself out, as well as these people who are with you, because the task is too heavy for you. You cannot do it alone, by yourself.

Exo 18:19 Now listen to my voice—I will give you advice, and may God be with you! You,

represent the people before God, and bring their cases to God.

Exo 18:20 Enlighten them as to the statutes and the laws, and show them the way by which they must walk and the work they must do.

Exo 18:21 But you should seek out capable men out of all the people—men who fear God, men of truth, who hate bribery. Appoint them to be rulers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

Exo 18:22 Let them judge the people all the time. Then let every major case be brought to you, but every minor case they can judge for themselves. Make it easier for yourself, as they bear the burden with you.

Exo 18:23 If you do this thing as God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their places in shalom.”

Exo 18:24 So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said.

Exo 18:25 Moses chose capable men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

Exo 18:26 They judged the people all the time. The hard cases they brought to Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.

Exo 18:27 Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went on his way to his own land. Tree of Life Version

Jethro comes from Midian to see Moses accompanied by Moses wife and sons after hearing about the great miracles done by YHVH for Israel. When he comes he notices the burden that Moses is carrying in trying to counsel God’s people and gives him wonderful advise which Moses was humble enough to listen to and implement. It is one thing to get good advice, but it takes a humble person to put that advise into action.

JETHRO [jĕth´rō] (Heb. *yitrō* “highness” or “eminence” [?]).† A priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses (Exod. 3:1; 4:18). At 2:18 he is called Reuel, which some scholars interpret as a clan name. In two passages Moses’ father-in-law is called Hobab (Num. 10:29 [perhaps referring to Reuel]; Judg. 4:11, RSV); while some scholars identify Jethro with Hobab, others interpret Heb. *hōtēn* variously as “brother-in-law” (Judg. 4:11, NIV) or “son-in-law.” Some view the variant names as reflecting different traditions.

When Moses fled Egypt he took refuge with Jethro in Midian. Having protected Jethro’s daughters, Moses was welcomed into the priest’s household, marrying his daughter Zipporah, and tending the flocks (Exod. 2:16–3:1). Later, when Jethro came to Moses at Mt. Sinai, he rejoiced at Israel’s deliverance and Yahweh’s revelation, offered thanksgiving sacrifices, and gave Moses counsel concerning the administration of justice (ch. 18). Jethro and his party did not go with Moses (v. 27).

Jethro was a Kenite, an itinerant smith related to the Midianites (Judg. 1:16).²

† Major revision

RSV Revised Standard
Version NIV New
International Version

² Myers, A. C. (1987). *The Eerdmans Bible dictionary* (577). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans

We can learn much as Congregations and Communities from these simple words of wisdom on how to help our leadership and Rabbis with the work load so they do not get burnt out.

Exo 18:19 Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God,

Exo 18:20 and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do.

Exo 18:21 Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens.

Exo 18:22 And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.

Jethro defines the ideal qualities of character required of judges. *Fear God, men of conscience (1:17 n.). Trustworthy men, or “men of truth.” Spurn ill gotten gain, unsusceptible to bribes (23:8).* In recounting this event in Deut. 1:13, 15, Moses lists intellectual qualifications. Maimonides, in defining the qualifications for judges, holds that the qualities of both lists, character as well as intellect, are required (*Hilkhot Sanh. 2.7*). *Chiefs of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens:* These are military ranks, consistent with the fact that the Israelites are organized as an army (12:41 n.) and have just fought a battle (17:8–16). Military officers sometimes held judicial responsibilities in the ancient Near East. **22:** *Major*, according to v. 26, “difficult.” **23:** *And God so commands you*, i.e., authorizes you to follow this suggestion. **27:** According to Num. 10:29–32, from a different source, Moses sought to persuade Jethro to remain with the Israelites and share God’s bounty with them in the promised land, but he declined.³

We see this same pattern in the book of Acts;

Act 6:1 Now in those days, when the disciples were multiplying, grumbling arose among the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily support.

Though not detailed specifically, it seems clear that a considerable length of time has passed from the previous chapter. And as the early Messianic Synagogues continued to grow, inevitable problems rose from within – Joel Lieberman *Acts of the Emissaries*.

There is nothing new under the sun, just as there are problems and issues in today’s Messianic Movement and Congregations, the same was true back in the early stages of the Messianic Congregations in the first century.

Greek-speaking Jews ... those who spoke Hebrew. The Greek words are “*Ellênistôn*” and “*Ebraious*” (“Hellenists” and “Hebraists”), and their precise meaning is debatable. The emphasis could be less on language than on culture, or even on geography—whether these Jews were native to the Diaspora or to *Eretz-Israel*. And even if the primary referent is language, some believe that Hebrew was no longer commonly spoken in Yeshua’s time and that Aramaic, the related Semitic language originally spoken in Babylon and learned by

many Jews during the Babylonian Exile, is what is meant. While it could be either or both, I am convinced that Hebrew was still widely spoken in New Testament times; see Mk 5:41N.

The division between Greek-speaking and Hebrew-speaking (or culturally Greek and culturally Hebrew) Jews dates from the conquest of *Eretz-Israel* by Alexander the Great in 323 B.C.E. He and his successors introduced the Greek language and Greek culture into the lands they ruled. While Hellenistic influence produced such fruits as the Septuagint, Philo of Alexandria and Josephus, “Hebraists” considered the “Hellenists” to have developed an adulterated Judaism which had assimilated elements of the pagan cultures around them—although the Judaism of the Hebrew-speakers had not avoided these influences either. The Maccabean Revolt (see Yn 10:22N) contains elements of intra-Jewish struggle related to this issue. In any case, groups which are different from each other can usually find excuses for deprecating each other.¹

Latter on in the B’rit Chadasha/New Testament (also referred to as Apostolic Scriptures) it appears that the Kehilah/Assembly at Ephesus seemed to have maintained a list of “qualified” widow that were supported by the congregation.

(1 Timothy 5:3-5, 9-10, 16) as a result of more highly organizing to meet this need.

1Ti 5:3 Honor widows who are really widows—

1Ti 5:4 but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to show devotion to their own home and give back to their parents, for this is pleasing before God.

1Ti 5:5 Now she who is really a widow and has been left alone, has put her hope in God and continues in petitions and prayers night and day.

1Ti 5:9 Let a widow be listed only if she is at least sixty, was the wife of one husband,

1Ti 5:10 well known for good deeds, if she raised children, if she showed hospitality, if she washed the feet of the kedoshim, if she helped those in trouble, and if she devoted herself to every good work.

1Ti 5:16 If any woman of faith has widows in need, let her help them and not let the community be burdened, so it may help the real widows.

We see the need for order and guidelines as the early Body of Messiah is growing and developing.

Act 6:2 So the Twelve called together the whole group of the disciples and said, “It is not right for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.

Act 6:3 So, brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this duty.

Act 6:4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the service of the Word.”

¹ Stern, D. H. (1996). [*Jewish New Testament Commentary : a companion volume to the Jewish New Testament*](#) (electronic ed., Ac 6:1). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

The Sh'lichim/Apostles called the whole Body together. They did not deny that the problem existed, but declared that their primary call and mission was to concentrate on the study and proclamation of the Word of God.

We see the same type of set up in today's Synagogues. There is the Rabbi, who is the teacher and spiritual leader of the Congregation, however the everyday workings of the Ministry is supervised by the President and lay people of the Community so that the Rabbi can focus on what he is called to do, and the President takes care of the Administrative needs supervises the other ministries within the Synagogue.

The Sh'lichim suggested that others be appointed to minister to the needy within the Community.

To serve tables. Understand this phrase as metonymy/metaphor: "to see that widows' needs are met," or: "to occupy ourselves with financial and administrative matters."²

The phrase "serve table" does not mean they are the waiters or waitresses of the Community the Greek word is diakonein trapezais is used of ministries' throughout the Brit Chadasha/New Testament.

The Hebrew equivalent is Shammash which means servant. These Shammashim were being chosen to minister as much as the Sh'lichim/Apostles, but in a different area of concentration. This does not mean that the Sh'lichim never met day-to-day needs of the flock, or that Shammashim never shared the Word. The Sh'lichim and the Shammashim served in both areas, however each concentrated upon their primary call and mission. Joel Leiberman Acts of the Emissaries.

The office of shammash is so important that the qualifications required are just as high as those demanded of an Elder.

The "Board of Shammashim" here in this passage was, in reality, not to respond to the "practical" situation (although they were appointed to oversee it) but to facilitate the ministry of the Emissary's vision. That is important because there's a principle here: that practicalities should not lead the congregation! Instead, the Congregation is to be directed by the vision of calling of those so charged. Practicalities are to serve the vision, not the other way around. The workings of the Shammashim fit into the definitions set by the Elders.

Each Congregation of Elders (i.e Congregational leaders whether they be Pastors or Rabbis or a group of Elders) will set its own definitions and priorities.

Shaul's first letter to Timothy outlines the high qualifications for Shammashim, all of whom must meet four personal specifications:

- They must be of good character and serious-minded
- They must speak the truth, have high integrity, and have honorable reputations
- They must not be given to excessive drinking
- They must not be greedy for dishonest gain.

Further, they must meet three very important spiritual qualifications

- They must hold to the mystery of the faith and have a good conscience about living and living and sharing it

² Stern, D. H. (1996). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : a companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed., Ac 6:2). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

- They must be full of the Ruach Hakodesh (Acts 6:3)
- They must be full of wisdom and able to discern (Acts 6:3)
- Finally, they must first be tested before they are called to this office and must be blameless (free from accusations)

1Ti 3:11 Women likewise must be dignified, not backbiting; clear-minded, trustworthy in every respect.

1Ti 3:12 Let servant-leaders be husbands of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.

Woman can also be Shammashim if the Congregation they attend approves. Some Congregations do not allow woman to be in positions of leadership, however the Scriptures show that God uses woman in positions of leadership. **Here at Deborah’s Messianic Ministries and The Way of Messiah encourage leadership among both men and woman of the Community who are teachable and have servant’s hearts.** See my book *“Daughters of Israel and their Impact in God’s Kingdom – Past, Present and Future”*

Rom 16:1 Now I recommend to you our sister Phoebe—who is a servant-leader of Messiah’s community at Cenchrea—

Rom 16:2 so you may receive her in the Lord, in a way worthy of kedoshim, and help her in whatever matter she may need from you. For she herself has become a patroness of many, including me as well.

Act 6:5 The statement pleased the whole group; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Ruach ha-Kodesh, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.

What they said was agreeable to the whole gathering, including the Hebrew-speakers, **5**

who apparently joined in protecting the interests of the Greek-speakers, for all seven appointees have Greek names. On **“Nicholas”** see Rv 2:6N; on **“proselyte”** see Mt 23:15N and notes cited there.

The Body acted in love and humility. Neither the Sh’lichim nor anyone else had any ruffled feathers or had their feelings hurt.

Act 6:6 They placed these men before the emissaries; and after praying, they laid hands on them.

6 Laid their hands on them, conferring the duties and privileges of their office; see Mt 21:23N on *“s.mikhah”* (“laying on of hands”).³

Here we find the official ordination. This was a definite service, a specific moment when the newly elected men were set apart for their ministry.

³ Stern, D. H. (1996). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : a companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed., Ac 6:5–6). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

When we were set apart for ministry and I was Ordained as a Rabbi, Rabbi Mordecai Silver flew in from New Mexico and anointed us with oil, laid hands on us (Minister Scott as well) and set us apart for the ministry as Congregation and Ministry Leaders.

The “laying on of hands” was not only a significant symbol for blessing, healing, commission and ordination, but also a very real ministry. ⁴

Leadership burnout is very common in ministry, God never calls one person to carry the load by themselves either financially or physically.

The Apostle Paul lays out how a Community should function

5 Fold Leadership

Eph 4:10 The One who came down is the same One who went up far above all the heavens, in order to fill all things.

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.

11. These are Yeshua’s gifts to the Messianic Community. Because the Greek is ambiguous, some take the two terms “**shepherds**” (pastors) and “**teachers**” to be speaking of one office—“shepherd-teachers.” Pastoring and teaching are overlapping yet distinguishable skills. **Emissaries** (apostles) found congregations. **Prophets** speak God’s word. **Proclaimers of the Good News** (evangelists) communicate the Good News so that people turn from sin and accept God’s forgiveness through the Messiah. **Pastors** carry on from there, discipling and counseling new and old believers in living the Messianic life. **Teachers** communicate and apply biblical truth. None is to boast about his position but to “equip God’s people,” as explained in vv. 12–13.

13–16 The New Covenant states that “they will not teach [each other], saying, ‘Know *Adonai*, because they will all know me” (Jeremiah 31:33(34)). This has not happened yet, and although the process has begun, we still need teachers (v. 12). How long? **Until we all**

⁴ Joel Lieberman Acts of the Emissaries

arrive at the unity (see vv. 2–6&N) implied by trusting and knowing the Son of God, and the other points of vv. 14–16 are fulfilled. ⁴ Complete Jewish New Testament Commentary

Ministry of Helps



1Co 12:4 Now there are various kinds of gifts, but the same Ruach. **1Co 12:5** There are various kinds of service, but the same Lord.

1Co 12:6 There are various kinds of working, but the same God who works all things in all people.

1Co 12:7 But to each person is given the manifestation of the Ruach for the benefit of all.

1Co 12:8 For to one is given through the Ruach a word of wisdom, to another a word of knowledge according to the same Ruach,

1Co 12:9 to another faith by the same Ruach, to another gifts of healings by

the one Ruach,

1Co 12:10 to another workings of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

1Co 12:11 But one and the same Ruach activates all these things, distributing to each person individually as He wills. TLV

Nine *charismata* (supernatural gifts; see v. 1) from the Holy Spirit are mentioned:

- (1) **Word of wisdom**, supernatural wisdom about how to solve a practical or spiritual problem. A homey example: my wife has what I playfully call the “gift of finding”; although she has plenty of *sekhel* (common sense) in knowing how to look for a lost item, not infrequently, in response to prayer, God reveals to her supernaturally where the missing item is located. (I provide her many opportunities to exercise her gift, since I seem to have the “gift” of losing.)
- (2) **Word of knowledge**, supernatural knowledge relevant to understanding a situation. Example: a pastor expelling demons from a woman was told by the Spirit that the demons were connected with “smell of mother”; it seems unlikely that hours of questioning the subject would have revealed that in times of stress she would smell the pillows her deceased mother once used.
- (3) **Faith** (or: “faithfulness”) beyond what believers “normally” have, even though all faith is a gift from God (Ep 2:8–9)—“the faith which produces not only miracles, but martyrs” (Robertson & Plummer’s *Commentary*).
- (4) **Gifts of healing**. Nearly everyone is acquainted with inexplicable healings (doctors more than most people). Some of these are from God, and of these some come in response to “ordinary” prayer (Ya 5:14–16), while others result from the ministry of those who have one or more of the “gifts” (plural) of healing. To complicate matters, there are healings and miracles that are not from God but from other spirits, even from Satan (Mt 24:24; Ac 16:16–19; 2C 11:14; 2 Th 2:9; Rv 13:1–4, 12–15), not to

⁴ Stern, D. H. (1996). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Eph 4:11–13). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

mention ordinary impostors who neither produce genuine healings nor draw on any spirit more supernatural than their own spirit of greed. Nevertheless, **healing was one of the chief ministries of Yeshua the Messiah when he walked the earth (Mt 4:23–24), and he promised that we who believe in him would do “even greater works” (Yn 14:12).**

(5) **The working of miracles.** In a sense the events of everyday life are miracles, but the concept here seems to refer to “unusual” miracles, not “usual” ones. Spectacular miracles are reported more frequently in areas where the Gospel is relatively new. For example, in the 1960’s reports came out of parts of Indonesia reached recently by the Gospel that water had been turned to wine and even that dead people had been raised to life. Verifying the truth of such reports is beyond the scope of a commentary, but the integrity of the Gospel demands avoiding credulity and applying evidential standards at least as high as for establishing other kinds of facts.

(6) **Prophecy** is speaking on behalf of God. The standard for judging a prophet is given in the *Torah*:

“But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods—that prophet shall die. And if you ask yourself, ‘How are we to know if the word spoken is not from *Adonai*?’—when a prophet speaks in the name of *Adonai*, if the thing predicted does not come to pass, then it has not been spoken by *Adonai*; rather, the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, and you are not to be afraid of him.” (Deuteronomy 18:20–22)

Significantly, this passage follows on Moshe’s prediction that “a prophet like me” would arise, that prophet being Yeshua (see Ac 3:22&N).

Prophecy, then, is speaking on God’s behalf, like the prophets of the *Tanakh*. Some, but not all, of their writings are predictive; but all are intended to inspire fear and awe of God. Today’s prophets speak on God’s behalf, but their prophecies do not thereby become Holy Scripture (many prophecies mentioned in the Bible did not become Holy Scripture either), but they are to be paid serious attention; see, however, paragraph (7) following. (Also see Ac 11:27N.)

(7) **The ability to judge between spirits**, popularly called “discernment of spirits,” is the ability to tell whether a particular phenomenon is from the Spirit of God, from a person’s own spirit, or from some demonic spirit; one might call it the supernatural ability to avoid being deceived. See paragraph (4) above for scriptural references. This particular gift is often needed in order to discern whether healings, miracles and prophecies are truly from God; it is also an indispensable part of the spiritual equipment of anyone who undertakes to expel demons.

(8) **The ability to speak in different kinds of tongues.** “Speaking in tongues” has become known more widely in the twentieth century than in centuries past, since there has been an entire movement within Christianity identified with it, namely, Pentecostalism, or, more recently, the Charismatic Movement among mainline denominations. The term means speaking in a language one has not learned.

The New Testament seems to mention or imply at least four **different kinds of tongues**:
5

(9) **The ability to interpret tongues**, to give the meaning in ordinary language of what is spoken by the “gift of tongues” (see 8(c) above) in a public worship service. From 14:5, 13 one can infer the following charismatic equation:

Tongues + Interpretation = Prophecy.⁶

Rom 12:3 For through the grace given me, I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of yourself than you ought to think—but to use sound judgment, as God has assigned to each person a measure of faith.

Rom 12:4 For just as we have many parts in one body—and all the parts do not have the same function—

Rom 12:5 so we, who are many, are one body in Messiah and everyone parts of one another.

Rom 12:6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace that was given to us—if prophecy, in proportion to our faith;

Rom 12:7 if service, in our serving; or the one who teaches, in his teaching;

Rom 12:8 or the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who gives, in generosity; the one who leads, with diligence; the one who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

12:4–13:10 This passage carries on the thought introduced in v. 3. Compare 1 Corinthians 12–14, which covers much the same subject matter. God’s people are an organic unity, a body (vv. 4–5). Each member of the body is given gifts (vv. 6–8) meant to be used properly and not abused (vv. 6–21), within an overall framework of love (vv. 9–13, 13:8–10) in which evil is to be overcome with good (12:14–13:7).

Or, looking at it from a different perspective, Sha’ul is setting up general guidelines for Messianic communal life. The Jewish people already had such guidelines in the *Torah*; here transcultural elements (see Ga 1:17N) are extracted and applied. Even today the Church can learn much about communal consciousness, caring and belonging from the Jewish community’s way of functioning.

4–5 People often think of membership in a synagogue or church as a matter of personal choice. But biblically, membership is organic, comparable with the relationship which members (**parts**) of the natural body have with each other, each with its own **function** but needing for its well-being the services of parts having other functions, and all contributing to the good of the entire body, whose life-energy is supplied by God. Compare 1C 7:4, 12:12; Ep 4:11–16.

⁵ Stern, D. H. (1996). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (1 Co 12:8). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

⁶ Stern, D. H. (1996). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (1 Co 12:8). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

6–8 God gives **gifts** (Greek *charismata*; see 1 Corinthians 12:8–10&N) to all believers and **grace** (*charis*) suited to each gift. For example, the grace accompanying **leadership** is **diligence** and **zeal**. In the context of v. 3, it is clear that boasting about one’s gifts is altogether out of place (compare 3:27; 1C 1:29–31, 4:7). Boasting kills unity.

Prophecy, literally, “speaking on behalf of,” in this case on behalf of God: the *Ruach HaKodesh* either gives supernatural insight or makes use of one’s own natural talents. Prophecy may be, but need not be, predictive.

Counselor ... comfort and exhort. See on “*parakalô*,” v. 1.⁷

Helping Hands When Leadership Get Weary



Exo 17:9 Moses said to Joshua, “Choose men, go out, and fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.”

Exo 17:10 So Joshua did as Moses said, and fought the Amalekites, while Moses, Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

Exo 17:11 When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed. But when he let down his hand, the Amalekites prevailed.

Exo 17:12 Moses’ hands grew heavy, so they took a stone, put it under him, and he sat down. Aaron and Hur held up his

hands, one on each side. So his hands were steady until the sun went down. TLV

⁷ Stern, D. H. (1996). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ro 12:3–6). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.