

A Call To Messianic Community and Commitment

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As we have come into Hebraic understanding of our faith in Messiah Yeshua we have found a different pace in life, a different focus and a different calendar. All too quickly, we find that our usual community arrangements don't fit very well. For those who grew up learning Torah from the beginning, there is usually a community already established around them. Their parents and other adults had made choices to be near to those of similar belief and lifestyle. Traditionally, it would be unthinkable for an Orthodox Jew to move anywhere that was not in close proximity to a faith community.

We grafted-in ones, of Ephraim and those who choose to draw near to YHWH Elohim, on the other hand, live wherever it has been convenient to maintain our family connections or perhaps proximity to our employment. We gather together throughout the week and on Shabbat enjoying the company of those who center their thoughts and desires on His plans for us much as we did in our mainstream church attendance days. If others are like me, at first consideration, it seemed a radical idea to choose to live in close proximity to those of similar faith. As a lifelong member of a church; each time I have moved I have chosen a church family after we have relocated to a neighborhood of our choice. It never occurred to me before coming into Torah that there was something less than desirable about this.

Visions of known cults or vigilante neighborhoods float in the back of our minds, making it seem unwise to get too close together with those of similar faith expression. We may be concerned about being stereotyped and viewed differently as people seem to do with Amish or Mennonite communities in our area. Questions of authority and control vs. personal autonomy and choice are real concerns because wherever there is strong commitment to an ideal there is the potential for abuse. These concerns seem to overshadow the positive aspects of living more closely associated with those of like faith.

Now as more than five years have gone by during which our little Torah pursuant community has been growing, we have come to enjoy and appreciate one another's company so much that our time together is always less than we'd like. As the world grows darker we seem to have less in common with others. Several of our people live within city limits although that is about a 20 miles radius, but several are in outlying communities or rural areas. This seems to be the rule for most Messianic fellowships, particularly in the northern areas of the U.S. We must make the sacrifice of long travel in order to find pockets of fellowship.

Inevitably at some point as a Torah pursuant fellowship develops, thoughts begin to wander toward the idea of being in closer proximity in order to better support one another in daily concerns, to be able to gather in study more readily, to be near those whose calendar is the same, or at least closer than that followed by society at large.

How exactly does one go about establishing a community; what has been called an "intentional community?" We have much to learn. We could start entirely on our own and make all the early mistakes common to those attempting to establish intentional community or we could examine what has been learned by others and use that as a base.

Over the past two years, we have begun researching what works and what doesn't work for those choosing to live in communities of like minded people. Our interest has grown in determination as the years go by.

We would like to present to our Messianic brothers and sisters what we have learned other intentional communities have tried and to gather what you have learned in your own pursuit of Messianic intentional community. We offer here a listing of various resources by or about those who have chosen intentional community living. Most of them are far away from being Torah pursuant in ideals although there are a few such communities based on Christian values. Inclusion in our listing does NOT mean that we in any way endorse the belief systems represented.

It is simply that these various groups represent many different types of organizational structures. Human nature being what it is, similar problems will arise. The solutions we choose will be based in our beliefs and will be most effective when they are deeply shared by those we choose to be in community with us.

- Variations on Community Living
- Shared household by one or more families or individuals
- Individual/family owned residences in a neighborhood
- Lodge type arrangements with private family quarters and public living space
- Dormitory style sleeping quarters with all food preparation and bathroom facilities provided communally
- Individual owner of larger complex with board of directors
- Joint purchase of property/living quarters
- Community-based economic structure to earn income/cottage industry
- Individuals pursue individual employment

Listed below are various links describing different types of intentional communities:

[Housing Cooperatives](#)

[Moshav](#)

[Intentional Community](#)