

CONGREGATION (COMMUNITY) OF BELIEVERS

1. INTRODUCTION

The constitution of the Congregation (Community) of Believers is the inspired scriptures. Hence, the following are just guidelines that should point to the inspired Word of God. Every guideline is expected to be in line with the inspired scriptures and never to contradict them.

All Inspired Scriptures shall be used for doctrine, correction, reproof, instructions & basis for any conduct. All Inspired Scriptures shall be the code of conduct. II Timothy 3:15-17.

The Body of the Messiah has always been a living organism, and was never meant to be an organization. It did not grow because of Alter calls, but through altered lives. Peter did not call them to say the 'sinners' prayer, instead they asked, "What do I need to do to become part of Yehoshua's Body. The people had a thirst to join something living, powerful and transformational. This thirst came from the preaching and teaching of the Gospel. The Congregation (Ekklesia) is a Community of Believers who are alive by the calling of the Messiah. Our mandate is for vital, loving, Messiah-Centred Communities.

Every area should have a community of believers caring for one another and meeting their surrounding communities' needs regardless of their denominational affiliation. These Communities of Believers should not be like a segregate Denomination but they should be believers walking in the path of Yehoshua Messiah. Congregation or Communities of Believers (COB) should be spiritually linked to other community of believers in other areas and should help one another despite various boundaries. The Community of Believers can consist of people from various Denominations but coming together for the common good around Yehoshua Messiah and they should be committed to meeting under and in the Name of their Master Yehoshua. They should come together because of the Name of Yehoshua Messiah and not any other Name. These should also do charitable deeds to all needy people despite their affiliations, status, race, tribe, religion and so on. They are above man-made boundaries and are those people that are willing to unite around the Messiah in the Father according to the prayer of Yehoshua Messiah for unity in John 17.

Someone said, "The longest distance we can travel could be from self-centeredness to Messiah-Centeredness, which will lead us to true community"

People are starved for love and acceptance but rarely find it in an event, so we shall commit ourselves to working together through demonstration of the love of the Father (YHWH). We shall be a network of people who refuse to allow doctrinal distinctives, racial differences, denominational allegiance or methodology divide us. It will take much work and even reconciliation but the idea is to develop a band of people who love the Messiah and love each other. Then we will be participating with the Father as He answers the Messiah's prayer request in John 17.

"...receiving the message with great eagerness and then checking the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul said was true." - Acts 17:11

1.1 DESCRIPTION

The COB is not a company owned by a man nor is it a political party. These should be ordinary people that love the Father (YHWH) and all mankind committed to serving the Father (YHWH) and fellow mankind and very committed to searching the TRUTH. They should be committed to defending the TRUTH and not defending a Denomination. They should care for one another and their surrounding communities to attract and influence positively.

Believers' communities are grown, not built. They are grown by the transformation power of the Father's word and not by powerful feelings. The Community of Believers is far more than a club, because being part of a Community of Faith has deep value to the individual.

Belonging is the fabric of people's lives instead of the fruit of their fun. The hardest part in growing an authentic Congregation (Community) of Believers is building a sharing culture, where people realize that Yehoshua is constantly doing significant work in each one of our lives. The acts of **sharing** and **servicing** are the life blood of a Congregation or Community of Believers, and everyone has a vital role to play.

Acts 2:42-47

Common English Bible (CEB)

⁴² The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. ⁴³ A sense of awe came over everyone. God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were united and shared everything. ⁴⁵ They would sell pieces of property and possessions and distribute the proceeds to everyone who needed them. ⁴⁶ Every day, they met together in the temple and ate in their homes. They shared food with gladness and simplicity. ⁴⁷ They praised God and demonstrated God's goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved.

There is need for forgiveness; and attraction Centre should be the Father (YHWH) and love for mankind. Prayer and fellowship around all core areas is vital but duration should be appropriate to all members for sustainability. Each COB should come up with its scriptural sustainability strategy. The COB consists of people that have decided to rise up above man-made boundaries and recognize the Kingdom of God to which all should belong. Love, sharing and serving are key requirements and activities for sustainability and growth.

1.2 PRINCIPLES

The following are principles of the COB:

1.2.1 Love for Elohim (God) and mankind

1Co 8:3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

1Jn 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

1Jn 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

Luk 6:27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

Gal 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

1.2.2 Sharing amongst ourselves

Everyone among believers had all things in common because of sharing.

Act 4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

Act 4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

Act 4:34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

Act 4:35 And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. Act 2:44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

Act 2:45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.

1.2.3 Serving Elohim (God) and mankind

Mat 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Joh 12:26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.

Rom 16:18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Col 3:24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

Tit 3:1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

Tit 3:2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

1.2.4 Unity in faith and in Yehoshua

Eph 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Psa 133:1 A Song of degrees of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity!

Psa 133:2 *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

Psa 133:3 As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore.

1.2.5 Obedience to the Father (YHWH)

Rom 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Rom 16:26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

Deu 11:27 A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day:

Deu 11:28 And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

Deu 13:4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

Jer 7:23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

Act 5:29 Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

Rom 2:8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

Gal 3:1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

1.2.6 Righteousness and holiness (Set-Apart)

Lev 20:7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I *am* the LORD your God.

1Pe 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

1Pe 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Mat 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Rom 6:13 Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God.

Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

2Pe 2:5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

2Pe 2:21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

1.3 GOAL

The Goal is to walk in love and truth of the Master Yehoshua Messiah regardless of man-made and earthly boundaries while reaching out to others to enter the Kingdom of the Father (YHWH).

1.4 OBJECTIVES

The main aims of the COB are:

1.4.1 To walk in Divine LOVE

"God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him." (1 John 4:16)

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35)

1.4.2 To be part of the Father's family in heaven and on earth

Gal 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

1Pe 3:8 Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:

Eph 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Eph 3:15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

1.4.3 To be part of Yehoshua's Body

1Co 12:12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ.

1Co 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

1Co 12:14 For the body is not one member, but many.

Eph 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

1.4.4 To be part of the Flock of the Father (YHWH)

Joh 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Act 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Believers are also described as part of a flock under the care of a shepherd. The shepherd is not passive. Rather, he is active in finding food for the flock, taking them to streams where they can drink, binding up the wounds of those who are injured, and protecting the flock against predators. Sometimes the shepherd must defend the sheep at the risk of his life.

1.4.5 To be part of the Congregation of Yehoshua and the Father (YHWH)

Mat 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

1Ti 3:5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

2. CONSTITUTION

2.1 PRESIDENT & HEAD

2.1.1 The President and Head is the Master Yehoshua Messiah.

2.1.2 No man is empowered in Scriptures to replace Messiah, the head.

Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4, Colossians 1:18, 24, I Corinthians 12:12-13, 27.

2.2 HEADQUARTERS

2.2.1 Headquarters of the Community of Believers shall be the heavenly Jerusalem.

2.2.2 There shall not be earthly headquarters.

Hebrews 12:22-23, Revelation 21:1-3, Galatians 4:25-26, John 4:20-26.

2.3 SOURCE OF FINANCES

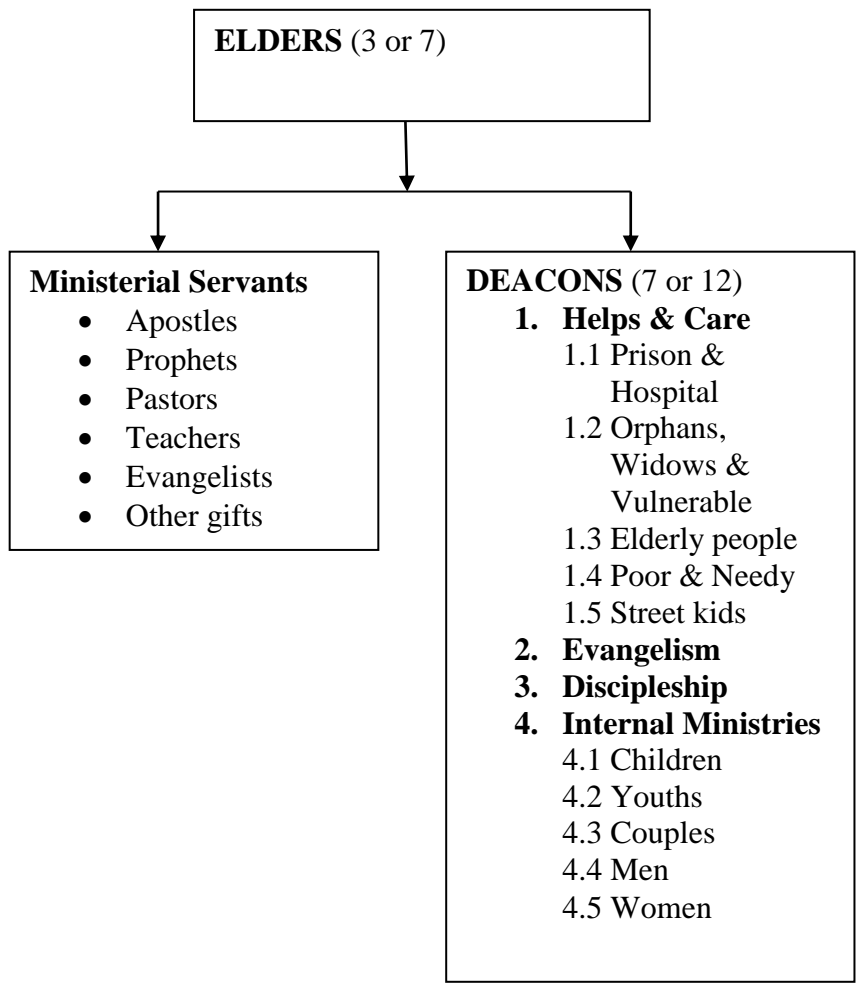
2.3.1 Source of finances shall be tithes & offerings as authorized by the Scriptures.

- 2.3.2 The law of tithes & offerings is still in force.
- 2.3.3 Every true believer shall be required, not by man, but by the Father (YHWH), to keep this law. Malachi 3:10

2.4 LEADERSHIP

- 2.4.1 Elders shall be congregation leadership. (3 or 7 per congregation)
- 2.4.2 Under Elders shall be Deacons. (7 or 12 per congregation)
- 2.4.3 The following ministries shall be taken care of by Deacons:
 - (a) Orphans, Widows & the Vulnerable e.g. elderly people, street kids, OVCs
 - (b) Children
 - (c) Youths
 - (d) Women
 - (e) Men
 - (f) Prison & Hospital
 - (g) Couples
 - (h) Evangelism, etc.

Acts 6:1-7, Matthew 25:31-46, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-17, Zechariah 11:17.



2.5 LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS

- 2.5.1 Elders & Deacons shall be chosen according to the qualification requirements in the Scriptures.
- 2.5.2 Prayers, if necessary fasting, shall be tools used in addition to Scriptures, in the choice of leadership. I Timothy 3:1-15, Titus 1:5-9, Romans 12:6-8.

2.6 MAIN FUNCTIONS OF LEADERSHIP

- 2.6.1 Encourage & strengthen the flock.
- 2.6.2 Protection of the flock from the Father (God)'s enemies.
- 2.6.3 Feeding the flock with the truth.
- 2.6.4 Leading and guiding the flock.
- 2.6.5 Carrying the vision of the Master Yehoshua Messiah.
- 2.6.6 Healing the sick flock.
- 2.6.7 Binding up the broken.
- 2.6.8 Bringing back that which is driven away.
- 2.6.9 Availability to the flock.
- 2.6.10 Seeking the Lord for direction.
- 2.6.11 Ensuring that the flock exercise & use their spiritual gifts
Matthew 18:12-14, John 21:15-17, Jeremiah 10:21, Jeremiah 12:10-11
I Timothy 5:17-19

2.7 AUTHORITY

- 2.7.1 The inspired scriptures shall be the overall authority for all actions, operations, decisions, conduct & faith.
- 2.7.2 Everything shall be required to bow down to the inspired scriptures.
- 2.7.3 Local leadership shall have authority only by the scriptures over the local Church.
- 2.7.4 The inspired scriptures shall be the authority through any local COB leadership.
- 2.7.5 One Community of Believers shall not head the other (s).
- 2.7.6 No one man alone shall have overall authority.
II Timothy 3:16-17, Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4, Colossians 1:18, 24, Hebrews 13:17, Hebrews 10:28-29, Revelation 11:3-4, Deuteronomy 17:6, Matthew 18:20, I John 5:7-8.

2.8 MEMBERSHIP

- 2.8.1 There shall be no earthly membership but fellowship in the Word of the Father (YHWH).

- 2.8.2 Fellowship & gatherings shall be in the name of the Master Yehoshua Messiah.
- 2.8.3 Only the Messiah by the Set-Apart Spirit has power to join an individual to His Body (Congregation).
- 2.8.4 True fellowship constitutes true faith in the Master Yehoshua Messiah.
Matthew 18:20

2.9 SCRIPTURE STUDY GROUPS

- 2.9.1 Apart from fellowshiping in a designated place, there shall be smaller groups per area fellowshiping in houses during the week.
- 2.9.2 Fellowshiping may be from house to house or a chosen house according to agreement of the group.
- 2.9.3 There shall be a minimum of 2 or a maximum of 3 leaders per home Congregation.
- 2.9.4 For those without designated worship places, they shall fellowship in houses.
- 2.9.5 Fellowship in houses shall be:
 - (a) Without disturbances to neighbors.
 - (b) Not noisy.
 - (c) Without overcrowding but a fair number.
- 2.9.6 To avoid overcrowding there shall be splitting into smaller groups.
Rom 16:4-5, Acts 7:47-53, Colossians 4:15, Philemon 2, Jeremiah 15:16-17, 19, Hebrews 10:25.

2.10 WORSHIP & FELLOWSHIP PLACES

- 2.10.1 Shall be named, for easy fellowship place identification, as:
 - (a) Gospel Hall
 - (b) Gospel Centre
 - (c) Worship Hall
 - (d) Fellowship Centre
 - (e) Fellowship Hall
 - (f) (Place) Congregation, etc.
- 2.10.2 A hall shall not be the Congregation of Yehoshua Messiah but it shall be a place where the Congregation meets for fellowship.
- 2.10.3 It is only the truly obedient persons worshipping in that hall that become part of the Body of Yehoshua Messiah.
- 2.10.4 These places shall not have images, icons, idols and man-made crosses.

2.11 MEETINGS

- 2.11.1 Shall be convened by the leadership (Elders & Deacons) for various purposes, all in all in order to uplift & carry out the vision of the Master Yehoshua.
- 2.11.2 Shall also be convened by one local leadership with other leadership of the same Community of Believers to share ideas and for other reasons.
- 2.11.3 Shall be convened as may be required.

2.12 DISCIPLINE & EXCOMMUNICATION

- 2.12.1 Excommunication shall be the last resort after all scriptural procedures are exhausted and the believer is given chance to repent but rejects the divine authority of Scriptures consistently.
- 2.12.2 Discipline & excommunication shall be according to the Scriptures. Matthew 18:15-17, 21-22, James 4:4, I Corinthians 10:20-22; 5:11, 2 John 10-11, Matthew 6:14-15, Titus 3:10-11.

2.13 DISAGREEMENTS & CONFLICTS

- 2.13.1 Shall be resolved by leadership and gifted brothers.
I Corinthians 6:1-11

2.14 RESPECT

- 2.14.1 We shall uphold respect:
- (a) Within a congregation – for all people
 - (b) Outside a congregation – for people, leaders in governments, local authorities, various organizations, etc.
- Titus 3:1-2, 3-5, I Peter 2:13-15, 16-18, James 5:9; 3:17-18

2.15 REVELATIONS & NEW DOCTRINES

- 2.15.1 Shall be examined by the leadership with the brethren in the light of Scriptures.
- 2.15.2 And if found to be truth, shall then be accepted and fed to the flock as safe food. I John 4:1-6.

2.16 STEWARDSHIP

- 2.16.1 All Elohim given gifts, talents, skills and offerings shall be used to serve the people to bring esteem (glory) to the Father and to achieve His divine will.
Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8

2.17 DISSOLUTION OF MINISTRY

- 2.17.1 We believe that the Messiah's true Body or Congregation shall not dissolve.
- 2.17.2 But in an event that a particular Community of Believers rebels against her head, Yehoshua Messiah, and is rejected, and scattered, then shall the government of the land have power over any physical assets or the assets shall be donated to other Community of Believers or the Needy.

2.18 ADVISORY BOARD

2.1.81 The COB shall have external Board of Believers (3 or 7) for accountability, transparency, advisory role, for counsel, etc. with respect to the aim of existence of the COB, performance and improvement.

2.19 DOCTRINAL BELIEFS

See separate booklet for doctrinal beliefs of the Community of Believers.

End.