

Notes: February 21, 2015

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and Greet
2. Introduction (if new people)
3. Ma Tovv
4. Open in Prayer for service
5. Liturgy – Sh'ma +
6. Announcements
7. Jeri - Drash
8. Praise and Worship Songs
9. Message
10. Aaronic Blessing
11. Kiddush
12. Oneg

Children's Blessing:

Transliteration: *Ye'simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve hee-Menashe*

English: *May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe*

Transliteration: *Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah.*

English: *May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

Introduction: Membership

Last year we began the membership process for Kehilah Portland. We started with a membership class, laying out to those who were interested what membership in Kehilah Portland is all about, leading to the culmination of our first group of recognized members.

What does scripture say about congregational membership? Is there sufficient evidence? Are there benefits to membership that will strengthen the individual who seeks membership?

When we look at Israel as a congregation, a Kehilah,

A people called out of Egypt and called into a land provided by Adonai, membership was based on birth. If you were a descendant of one of Ya'akov's, you were considered a member of the community.

Exo 19:5 Now if you will pay careful attention to what I say and keep my covenant, then you will be my own treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine;

Exo 19:6 and you will be a kingdom of cohanim for me, a nation set apart.' These are the words you are to speak to the people of Isra'el."

It wasn't just for the descendants of Ya'akov. If you desired to worship and serve the God of the patriarchs, there was provision for the stranger and foreigner. The one's not of their seed, could come into covenant. To come into covenant, required an act required by the covenant, to show that you have become a member of the covenant. For men that was circumcision.

As time passes, Israel would receive, bring into, or proselyte people and they would become part of Israel.

So, when we get to the time of Yeshua, He conveys that His message is to be transmitted to the nations. Not just Jewish people scattered among the nations but those who are not Jewish will hear and receive the Message of Messiah. To where in Acts 15 we come to the membership issue of Israel.

Droves of people from other nations are coming to faith in the Jewish Messiah.

What should we do?

How should we respond?

In receiving the Jewish Messiah does that make them part of Israel. If so, do we bring them into covenant as we have always done before?

Many questions...

Some believed...

Act 15:1 But some men came down from Y'hudah to Antioch and began teaching the brothers, "You can't be saved unless you undergo b'rit-milah in the manner prescribed by Moshe."

Act 15:2 This brought them into no small measure of discord and dispute with Sha'ul and Bar-Nabba. So the congregation assigned Sha'ul, Bar-Nabba and some of themselves to go and put this sh'eilah before the emissaries and the elders up in Yerushalayim.

These people believed in what Torah states for foreigners coming into the covenant Adonai made with Israel.

However, not everyone felt the same way...

Act 15:3 After being sent off by the congregation, they made their way through Phoenicia and Shomron, recounting in detail how the Gentiles had turned to God; and this news brought great joy to all the brothers.

Act 15:4 On arrival in Yerushalayim, they were welcomed by the Messianic community, including the emissaries and the elders; and they reported what God had done through them.

Act 15:5 But some of those who had come to trust were from the party of the P'rushim; and they stood up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and direct them to observe the Torah of Moshe."

This was the "hot topic" of the day.

When you have dispute in a congregation you have a meeting to address the issue...

Act 15:6 The emissaries and the elders met to look into this matter.

Act 15:7 After lengthy debate, Kefa got up and said to them, "Brothers, you yourselves know that a good while back, God chose me from among you to be the one by whose mouth the Goyim should hear the message of the Good News and come to trust.

Act 15:8 And God, who knows the heart, bore them witness by giving the Ruach HaKodesh to them, just as he did to us;

Act 15:9 that is, he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their heart by trust.

So, is Kefa saying there is no distinction regarding how we should live or is he saying that there is no distinction in how we are permitted to enter into this membership?

Act 15:10 So why are you putting God to the test now by placing a yoke on the neck of the talmidim which neither our fathers nor we have had the strength to bear?

The term "yoke" in this context is certainly Jewish enough. For example, the Mishna explains with these words why [Deu 6:4-9](#) precedes [Deu 11:13-21](#) in the *Sh'ma Israel* portion of the synagogue liturgy:

"For what reason does the [paragraph beginning with the word] '*Sh'ma*' precede the [paragraph beginning with] '*V'hayah im shamo'a*'? So that one should first accept upon oneself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, and [only] after that accept upon oneself the yoke of the *mitzvot*." (B'rakhot 2:2; the phrase "yoke of the *mitzvot*" also occurs in Sifra 57b).

In this *mishna* the term "yoke" does not imply an oppressive burden any more than Yeshua's yoke does. Accepting the "yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven" means acknowledging God's sovereignty and his right to direct our lives. Once one acknowledges his right to direct our lives, it is obvious that if he has given commandments we should obey them. The same is true of Yeshua, who put it this way ([Joh 14:15](#)): "If you love me" (compare the first paragraph of the *Sh'ma*), "you will keep my commands" (compare the second).

So then, if the "yoke of the commandments" is not burdensome, what is Kefa talking about? He is speaking here of the detailed mechanical rule-keeping, regardless of heart attitude, that some (but not all!) *P'rushim*, including, apparently, the ones mentioned in [Act 15:5](#), held to be the essence of Judaism. This was not the "yoke of the *mitzvot*" prescribed by God, but a yoke of legalism prescribed by men! The yoke of legalism is indeed unbearable, but the yoke of the *mitzvot* has always required, first of all ([Mar 12:28-34](#)), love of God and neighbor; and it now implies love toward Yeshua the Messiah. But love can *never* be legalistic! Sha'ul too spoke of legalism as a "yoke of slavery" ([Gal 5:1](#)); see his detailed exposition of the subject in Romans 1-11.

So, membership and its requirements according to the "heavy yoke" was not intended for the nations, nor Israel, yet existed then and still does today.

Membership into the covenant of Adonai that offers up the "light yoke" of the Kingdom of Heaven is construed by Kehliah Portland as well.

When we talk membership in the congregation, there are precedence for membership from a Scriptural perspective.

In addition to precedence, there are also many benefits to covenantal membership...

1. Believers always gathered together in congregations wherever the message of Yeshua went forth.

[Act 2:42](#) They continued faithfully in the teaching of the emissaries, in fellowship, in breaking bread and in the prayers.

[Act 2:43](#) Everyone was filled with awe, and many miracles and signs took place through the emissaries.

[Act 2:44](#) All those trusting in Yeshua stayed together and had everything in common;

[Act 2:45](#) in fact, they sold their property and possessions and distributed the proceeds to all who were in need.

[Act 2:46](#) Continuing faithfully and with singleness of purpose to meet in the Temple courts daily, and breaking bread in their several homes, they shared their food in joy and simplicity of heart,

[Act 2:47](#) praising God and having the respect of all the people. And day after day the Lord kept adding to them those who were being saved.

[Act 13:1](#) In the Antioch congregation were prophets and teachers — Bar-Nabba, Shim'on (known as "the Black"), Lucius (from Cyrene), Menachem (who had been brought up with Herod the governor) and Sha'ul.

[Act 13:2](#) One time when they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Ruach HaKodesh said to them, "Set aside for me Bar-Nabba and Sha'ul for the work to which I have called them."

[Act 14:23](#) After appointing elders for them in every congregation, Sha'ul and Bar-Nabba, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust.

[Act 15:41](#) He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the congregations.

[Rev 1:11](#) saying, "Write down what you see on a scroll, and send it to the seven Messianic communities — Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea!"

2. Membership facilitates relationships and established principles and patterns of conduct for worship and service.

[1Co 14:28](#) And if there is no one present who can interpret, let the people who speak in tongues keep silent when the congregation meets — they can speak to themselves and to God.

1Co 16:1 Now, in regard to the collection being made for God's people: you are to do the same as I directed the congregations in Galatia to do.

1Co 16:2 Every week, on Motza'ei-Shabbat, each of you should set some money aside, according to his resources, and save it up; so that when I come I won't have to do fundraising.

3. Membership provides for fellowship, a vital aspect pertaining to the promotion of spiritual growth.

Act 2:42 They continued faithfully in the teaching of the emissaries, in fellowship, in breaking bread and in the prayers.

4. Membership provides opportunity to comply with the command to observe Yeshua's table.

1Co 11:23 For what I received from the Lord is just what I passed on to you — that the Lord Yeshua, on the night he was betrayed, took bread;

1Co 11:24 and after he had made the b'rakhah he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this as a memorial to me";

1Co 11:25 likewise also the cup after the meal, saying, "This cup is the New Covenant effected by my blood; do this, as often as you drink it, as a memorial to me."

5. Membership makes it possible to comply with the command of the Mitzvot to do good, especially to fellow believers.

Gal 6:1 Brothers, suppose someone is caught doing something wrong. You who have the Spirit should set him right, but in a spirit of humility, keeping an eye on yourselves so that you won't be tempted too.

Gal 6:2 Bear one another's burdens — in this way you will be fulfilling the Torah's true meaning, which the Messiah upholds.

Gal 6:10 Therefore, as the opportunity arises, let us do what is good to everyone, and especially to the family of those who are trustingly faithful.

6. Membership makes it possible to comply with the directions concerning discipline.

1Co 5:1 It is actually being reported that there is sexual sin among you, and it is sexual sin of a kind that is condemned even by pagans — a man is living with his stepmother!

1Co 5:2 And you stay proud? Shouldn't you rather have felt some sadness that would have led you to remove from your company the man who has done this thing?

1Co 5:3 For I myself, even though I am absent physically, am with you spiritually; and I have already judged the man who has done this as if I were present.

1Co 5:4 In the name of the Lord Yeshua, when you are assembled, with me present spiritually and the power of our Lord Yeshua among us,

1Co 5:5 hand over such a person to the Adversary for his old nature to be destroyed, so that his spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord.

1Co 5:6 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know the saying, "It takes only a little hametz to leaven a whole batch of dough?"

1Co 5:7 Get rid of the old hametz, so that you can be a new batch of dough, because in reality you are unleavened. For our Pesach lamb, the Messiah, has been sacrificed.

1Co 5:8 So let us celebrate the Seder not with leftover hametz, the hametz of wickedness and evil, but with the matzah of purity and truth.

1Co 5:9 In my earlier letter I wrote you not to associate with people who engage in sexual immorality.

1Co 5:10 I didn't mean the sexually immoral people outside your community, or the greedy, or the thieves or the idol-worshippers — for then you would have to leave the world altogether!

1Co 5:11 No, what I wrote you was not to associate with anyone who is supposedly a brother but who also engages in sexual immorality, is greedy, worships idols, is abusive, gets drunk or steals. With such a person you shouldn't even eat!

1Co 5:12 For what business is it of mine to judge outsiders? Isn't it those who are part of the community that you should be judging?

1Co 5:13 God will judge those who are outside. Just expel the evildoer from among yourselves.

Gal 1:1 From: Sha'ul, an emissary — I received my commission not from human beings or through human mediation but through Yeshua the Messiah and God the Father, who raised him from the dead — also from all the brothers with me

Mat 18:15 "Moreover, if your brother commits a sin against you, go and show him his fault — but privately, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother.

Mat 18:16 If he doesn't listen, take one or two others with you so that every accusation can be supported by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

Mat 18:17 If he refuses to hear them, tell the congregation; and if he refuses to listen even to the congregation, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax-collector.

7. Membership breeds commitment which leads to growth and maturity in the Word of Adonai.

1Ti 5:17 The leaders who lead well should be considered worthy of double honor, especially those working hard at communicating the Word and at teaching.

1Pe 5:1 Therefore, I urge the congregation leaders among you, as a fellow-leader and witness to the Messiah's sufferings, as well as a sharer in the glory to be revealed:

1Pe 5:2 shepherd the flock of God that is in your care, exercising oversight not out of constraint, but willingly, as God wants; and not out of a desire for dishonest gain, but with enthusiasm;

1Pe 5:3 also not as machers domineering over those in your care, but as people who become examples to the flock.

8. Membership makes it possible to comply with the instruction to contribute to the support of Adonai's work within the congregation and extending to the outer ends of the world.

1Ti 5:17 The leaders who lead well should be considered worthy of double honor, especially those working hard at communicating the Word and at teaching.

1Ti 5:18 For the Tanakh says, "You are not to muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain," in other words, "The worker deserves his wages."

Gal 6:6 But whoever is being instructed in the Word should share all the good things he has with his instructor.

1Co 16:1 Now, in regard to the collection being made for God's people: you are to do the same as I directed the congregations in Galatia to do.

1Co 16:2 Every week, on Motza'ei-Shabbat, each of you should set some money aside, according to his resources, and save it up; so that when I come I won't have to do fundraising.

1Co 16:3 And when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the people you have approved, and I will send them to carry your gift to Yerushalayim.

9. Membership makes it possible to perpetuate the preservation and teaching of Torah.

2Ti 2:2 And the things you heard from me, which were supported by many witnesses, these things commit to faithful people, such as will be competent to teach others also.

2Pe 1:19 Yes, we have the prophetic Word made very certain. You will do well to pay attention to it as to a light shining in a dark, murky place, until the Day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts.

2Pe 1:20 First of all, understand this: no prophecy of Scripture is to be interpreted by an individual on his own;

2Pe 1:21 for never has a prophecy come as a result of human willing — on the contrary, people moved by the Ruach HaKodesh spoke a message from God.

2Pe 2:1 But among the people there were also false prophets, just as there will be false teachers among you. Under false pretenses they will introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and thus bring on themselves swift destruction.

2Pe 2:2 Many will follow their debaucheries; and because of them, the true Way will be maligned.

2Pe 2:3 In their greed they will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their punishment, decreed long ago, is not idle; their destruction is not asleep!

Ultimately, it would be through Israel who would be responsible to maintain the Word of Adonai, so that it wouldn't disappear from the world.

10. Membership give believers opportunity to share in responsibilities incumbent upon all.

Act 6:3 Brothers, choose seven men from among yourselves who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will appoint them to be in charge of this important matter,

Act 6:4 but we ourselves will give our full attention to praying and to serving the Word."

Mat 18:17 If he refuses to hear them, tell the congregation; and if he refuses to listen even to the congregation, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax-collector.

1Co 5:12 For what business is it of mine to judge outsiders? Isn't it those who are part of the community that you should be judging?

1Co 5:13 God will judge those who are outside. Just expel the evildoer from among yourselves.

1Co 16:1 Now, in regard to the collection being made for God's people: you are to do the same as I directed the congregations in Galatia to do.

1Co 16:2 Every week, on Motza'ei-Shabbat, each of you should set some money aside, according to his resources, and save it up; so that when I come I won't have to do fundraising.

11. Membership brings encouragement and strength to others through common understanding of goals, vision, conduct and doctrine.

2Pe 1:2 May grace and shalom be yours in full measure, as you come to a full knowledge of God and Yeshua our Lord.

Act 11:19 Now those who had been scattered because of the persecution which had arisen over Stephen went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch; they spoke God's word, but only to Jews.

Act 11:20 However, some of these, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, when they arrived at Antioch, began speaking to the Greeks too, proclaiming the Good News of the Lord Yeshua.

Act 12:5 So Kefa was being held under watch in prison, but intense prayer was being made to God on his behalf by the Messianic community.

Act 13:1 In the Antioch congregation were prophets and teachers — Bar-Nabba, Shim'on (known as "the Black"), Lucius (from Cyrene), Menachem (who had been brought up with Herod the governor) and Sha'ul.

Act 13:2 One time when they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Ruach HaKodesh said to them, "Set aside for me Bar-Nabba and Sha'ul for the work to which I have called them."

Act 13:3 After fasting and praying, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Act 13:4 So these two, after they had been sent out by the Ruach HaKodesh, went down to Seleucia and from there sailed to Cyprus.

12. Membership is a confession of faith, a proclamation to the world, a commitment to a task, and a pledge to work together with those of like, precious faith.

Act 5:12 Meanwhile, through the emissaries many signs and miracles continued to be done among the people. United in mind and purpose, the believers met in Shlomo's Colonnade;

Act 5:13 and no one else dared to join them. Nevertheless, the people continued to regard them highly;

Act 5:14 and throngs of believers were added to the Lord, both men and women.

Why Membership?

Heb 10:24 And let us keep paying attention to one another, in order to spur each other on to love and good deeds,

Heb 10:25 not neglecting our own congregational meetings, as some have made a practice of doing, but, rather, encouraging each other. And let us do this all the more as you see the Day approaching.

1. To be rooted and grounded.

- Shows stability
- Shows focus, being directed by purpose and vision of congregation.
- Shows that you are not wayward or haphazardly following which ever way the wind blows.

Psa 1:1 How blessed are those who reject the advice of the wicked, don't stand on the way of sinners or sit where scoffers sit!
Psa 1:2 Their delight is in Adonai's Torah; on his Torah they meditate day and night.
Psa 1:3 They are like trees planted by streams - they bear their fruit in season, their leaves never wither, everything they do succeeds.
Psa 1:4 Not so the wicked, who are like chaff driven by the wind.
Psa 1:5 For this reason the wicked won't stand up to the judgment, nor will sinners at the gathering of the righteous.
Psa 1:6 For Adonai watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked is doomed.

Psa 92:12 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar in the L'vanon.
Psa 92:13 Planted in the house of Adonai, they will flourish in the courtyards of our God.
Psa 92:14 Even in old age they will be vigorous, still full of sap, still bearing fruit,
Psa 92:15 proclaiming that Adonai is upright, my Rock, in whom there is no wrong.

2. Spiritual Growth

- A doer of Torah

Jas 1:25 But if a person looks closely into the perfect Torah, which gives freedom, and continues, becoming not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work it requires, then he will be blessed in what he does.

Jas 1:26 Anyone who thinks he is religiously observant but does not control his tongue is deceiving himself, and his observance counts for nothing.

- Nourishment of both milk and meat of Torah
- The potential to not remain a "baby believer", only being able to accept the milk of scripture.

1Co 3:1 As for me, brothers, I couldn't talk to you as spiritual people but as worldly people, as babies, so far as experience with the Messiah is concerned.

1Co 3:2 I gave you milk, not solid food, because you were not yet ready for it. But you aren't ready for it now either!

1Co 3:3 For you are still worldly! Isn't it obvious from all the jealousy and quarreling among you that you are worldly and living by merely human standards?

3. Exercise of Spiritual Gifts

Act 6:1 Around this time, when the number of talmidim was growing, the Greek-speaking Jews began complaining against those who spoke Hebrew that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution.

Act 6:2 So the Twelve called a general meeting of the talmidim and said, "It isn't appropriate that we should neglect the Word of God in order to serve tables.

Act 6:3 Brothers, choose seven men from among yourselves who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will appoint them to be in charge of this important matter,

Act 6:4 but we ourselves will give our full attention to praying and to serving the Word."

Act 6:5 What they said was agreeable to the whole gathering. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Ruach HaKodesh, Philip, Prochoros, Nikanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicholas, who was a proselyte from Antioch.

Act 6:6 They presented these men to the emissaries, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

Act 6:7 So the word of God continued to spread. The number of talmidim in Yerushalayim increased rapidly, and a large crowd of cohanim were becoming obedient to the faith.

- Gifts to the Congregation

Eph 4:8 This is why it says, "After he went up into the heights, he led captivity captive and he gave gifts to mankind."

Eph 4:9 Now this phrase, "he went up," what can it mean if not that he first went down into the lower parts, that is, the earth?

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.

- We all have Gifts

1Co 12:7 Moreover, to each person is given the particular manifestation of the Spirit that will be for the common good.

1Co 12:8 To one, through the Spirit, is given a word of wisdom; to another, a word of knowledge, in accordance with the same Spirit;

1Co 12:9 to another, faith, by the same Spirit; and to another, gifts of healing, by the one Spirit;

1Co 12:10 to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, the ability to judge between spirits; to another, the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues; and to yet another, the ability to interpret tongues.

1Co 12:11 One and the same Spirit is at work in all these things, distributing to each person as he chooses.

- We all have motivational Gifts

Rom 12:4 For just as there are many parts that compose one body, but the parts don't all have the same function;

Rom 12:5 so there are many of us, and in union with the Messiah we comprise one body, with each of us belonging to the others.

Rom 12:6 But we have gifts that differ and which are meant to be used according to the grace that has been given to us. If your gift is prophecy, use it to the extent of your trust;

Rom 12:7 if it is serving, use it to serve; if you are a teacher, use your gift in teaching;

Rom 12:8 if you are a counselor, use your gift to comfort and exhort; if you are someone who gives, do it simply and generously; if you are in a position of leadership, lead with diligence and zeal; if you are one who does acts of mercy, do them cheerfully.

- Prophecy
- Service
- Teaching
- Exhorting
- Giving
- Leading
- Mercy

- All Gifts are needed in order to strengthen believers in the Congregation. All Gifts are important.

1Pe 4:10 As each one has received some spiritual gift, he should use it to serve others, like good managers of God's many-sided grace —

1Pe 4:11 if someone speaks, let him speak God's words; if someone serves, let him do so out of strength that God supplies; so that in everything God may be glorified through Yeshua the Messiah — to him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

1Co 12:11 One and the same Spirit is at work in all these things, distributing to each person as he chooses.

1Co 12:12 For just as the body is one but has many parts; and all the parts of the body, though many, constitute one body; so it is with the Messiah.

1Co 12:13 For it was by one Spirit that we were all immersed into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free; and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

1Co 12:14 For indeed the body is not one part but many.

Benefits of Membership Found Through Covenantal Commitment.

1. Pastoral Care – including making yourself accountable
2. Protection
3. Fellowship
4. Growth through Biblical Teaching and Spiritual Guidance
5. Discipline
6. Responsibility
7. Service

As a Kehilah, Israel received the same benefits.

Let me state, that for some time I was not a proponent of formal membership, until I went through the membership classes at Brith Hadoshah and came away changed, with a new and deeper understanding of membership.

Like marriage, membership is a covenant.

In many cases, those who attend a congregation and have not become members, are living together, they are not married.

They have not made a formal and public commitment.

Living together offers the same benefits. You can have most of the benefits of marriage without being married, implying that when the relationship is no longer beneficial, you can leave at any time.

This has never been the type of relationship that Adonai endorsed.

There were many times Israel tried His patience, yet the covenant, is still there. So much so, that He made a New Covenant with the same people.

Ultimately, attendance without a formal membership structure is no real commitment.

I have had people tell me that they only have one Shepherd and that is Yeshua. When I hear this, it tells me:

- There is an issue with authority
- There are scars resulting from past experiences with leadership
- There is a lack of understanding regarding the meaning of covenant in relation to membership

Whatever the reason, there is something standing between them and Adonai, thus preventing them from reaching their full potential as believers and followers of Yeshua.

Commitment in itself, requires stepping out on faith, trusting that the congregation you are part of is doing as Adonai has instructed.