

5 Reasons You Need to Be Part of a Congregation

“I do not need to be in a congregation.” This statement is a representation of not only many young people today, but of even some older people who are in their senior years of disillusionment with congregational life as they experienced it.

Yet, it is so very different than what would have been stated decades ago both by Jews and Christians. At that time, the idea of being a part of a congregation was not based on a person's perception of what he or she needed, but rather on what God required. God was understood as the great king who was to be feared. Yes, He is loving, but flouting His will was considered very dangerous.

So the idea was common, that if one was to walk in the blessing and protection of God, we had better find out what His will is and conform our lives to that will. The question was not “what do I need?” but “what does the Lord require of me”?

One cannot fairly read the New Covenant Scriptures without seeing that God requires all who claim to be followers of Yeshua to be committed to a congregation where they are to be submitted to a qualified eldership as the shepherds and overseers of their lives (I Pet. 5:1-5). We can begin with all the texts that speak of the responsibility of congregational members to their elders, from submitting to them (Heb. 13:7, 17), being instructed by them (1 Tim. 3, Titus 1) and exercising the gifts of the Spirit in a context of gatherings that assume their oversight and discernment (1 Cor. 12, 14).

In addition, one should not determine their true needs without the revelation of God. It is like a car. We may think it is

running fine. The idea that I have to take it to the shop for regular maintenance doesn't seem to matter. I pass the recommended standard and all seems to be running fine, until one day the engine freezes up and after having the car towed to the shop, I am told I "need" a new engine.

However, as God sees us—and in his definition of need—we truly need congregational life and eldership oversight. Here is why:

1. God expects us to be in submission to an eldership to whom we are accountable so that we might be taught and grow into the likeness of the Messiah. I know of no one who professes faith who has ever gotten very far in this without congregational life. In the ups and downs of life together in a congregation, in forgiving, submitting and serving, we grow. We need congregational life to fulfill the biblical demand to be conformed to Yeshua. We need congregation to grow in character.

2. We need a congregation to grow in our exercise of the gifts of the Spirit.

3. We need a congregation to bring regular corporate worship before God. This is both our responsibility as part of his corporate temple and as part of intercessory responsibility as his priesthood.

4. We need a congregation so we might be taught and mentored by those who have attained what we have not yet attained. This includes everything from marriage and family life to personal devotion. Plus, the Bible says God has given five kinds of gifted people, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip us for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:11ff). But they cannot equip us if we are not in congregational life and submitted to their gifting to equip us.

5. We need a congregation to fulfill God's command and to walk in the fear of God and to be assured of his blessing. If we are in known disobedience here, we cannot expect His blessing

on our lives. {eoa}