

Congregation Beit Mashiach
Pastor Andrew Ketel
Shabbat Message
September 9, 2017

Title: Covenantal Relationship – Part 2

Text: I Samuel 18:1-4

In our individualistic world, covenantal relationship is something that we really do not understand well. David and Jonathan's love for one another serves as an ideal of how two persons can be united in vision and kinship, through which they can be knit together as one (Lev. 19:18; I Sam. 20:17; Rom. 12:15). It is then that one's soul can have a desire for the benefit of the other that is equal to his own. As we had mentioned last week that this covenant was not merely between two young men, but also had Adonai in the midst of it (I Sam. 20:23). It was the revelation of Adonai's purpose and plan that was the very grounds for them to cut covenant (I Sam. 23:17; Rom. 12:10). It was on this basis that Jonathan was more than willing and able to step aside and bless David, as his destiny became that of David's. As the preacher states that, "*A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart*" (Eccl. 4:12b). When Adonai is the basis of our relationship than we have tapped into a strength that circumstances and the enemy will find very difficult to come in between.

What I have shared over the past two weeks has as its goal the quest to explain the heart of covenant membership within a congregation. So, what does covenant membership mean and what does it look like? I have heard it stated that membership is not needed in the Body of Messiah, because once we are born again we become part of the universal body of believers. In essence that is true, but at the same time it does not in any manner diminish the importance of local commitment. In the Early Church, it was a common understanding that when one was mikvahed that the candidate would commit his loyalty to the pastoral figure who officiated or/and to the congregation who witnessed the immersion. This was at the heart of the Apostle Paul's discourse in I Corinthians 1:12-17 concerning the party spirit that had developed in the Congregation of Corinth (I Cor. 10:2). In the same manner covenant membership is actually a commitment of loyalty to support and work towards the realization of the vision and calling of the specific local congregation.

So how do we transfer the principles of covenantal relationship that we have learnt over the past two weeks to practical ways of expressing this level of commitment. Keith Intrater in his book, "*Covenant Relationships*" outlines five basic ways that covenant membership is walked out in everyday life of a Congregation.

I. Attendance

It is not uncommon to hear from other Pastors that their average attendee attends service one or twice a month. Yet, the writer of Hebrews points out the importance to attend worship services on a regular basis (Heb. 10:25). As a covenant member, it is imperative to attend regular worship services and other schedule events to ensure spiritual growth and maturity. Adonai has drawn you to this congregation so that you can be nurtured under this ministry and also gives you an opportunity to be accountable to others. I personally believe if you are committed than service and congregational events should take priority on your calendar. A

dentist or doctor's appointment does not necessarily need to be made when there is a community activity happening. Without attending regularly, you will never receive the fullness of the flow of anointing that Adonai is attempting to release upon any given congregation.

II. Service

Every individual once they become members then should be willing to serve the community with an area of practical service. I not saying that each individual determines what they would like to do, but rather offer themselves to do what the leadership asks of them. In order to serve it is important to attend regularly so that you can be depended upon. Often, I have been accused of showing favouritism, but in actually the reason that I ask some more than others is because they can be depended upon to show up. Yeshua give us the example of washing his disciples' feet (John 13) stressing the importance of service towards your community. It is key for any community to grow when everyone has a part, it is than that the leadership can focus upon their calling of prayer and the study of the word.

III. Tithing

So often I have seen the work of Adonai come up short because of a lack of finances. If every member committed to the act of tithing I believe Adonai in His faithfulness would multiply what was given, so that lack would not be there (Prov. 3:9, 10). When we speak of tithing, what we are referring to is 10% of your increase. The tithe stands apart from your giving to the poor, special offering and to other ministries. All of those should be over and above the tithe, but the tithe belongs in the local congregation which you attend. These tithes are meant to meet the to support the needs, that is the expenses to operate the ministry.

IV. Vision

Every congregation has a unique (individual) identity, calling and destiny given to them by Adonai. Most often this vision is birthed within the heart of the community's leadership and should be shared and sown into the hearts of the congregation. When a new member joins any given congregation, what he is saying is that he embraces the vision of the congregation. Not that he comes into membership to shape and form the community's vision. Rather he joins with the purpose to support and offer of himself to realize the community's vision under the direction of its leadership. What each potential member needs to ask themselves is have I been called by Adonai to help support this vision.

V. Receptivity to Elders

"Intimacy demands commitment. Commitment, if it is directed towards Adonai, will eventuate in a flow of leadership to be able to pursue Adonai's purpose." When Adonai works with His people I have always noticed that it is through and by leadership. That is what gives the community direction and stability. When one joins a congregation, he is saying that he affirms the leadership and is willing to submit to their leadership. Being receptive towards the elders means that you respect (embrace) their authority, anointing and counsel. I have always found when the congregation has confidence in its leadership than it releases a greater ability for them to pour into your live. Disunity has the ability to block the anointing of Adonai from being released upon a community (Heb. 13:17). Also, as our Brit Hadashah portion this Sabbath (Eph. 4:12) points out that the leaderships task is to equip you for the ministry of the gospel. When we

are drawn by Adonai to join a congregation it is because He has something you must receive from those who have been placed in leadership in that community.

Within the economy of Adonai there is a multiplication factor that covenant membership brings to the table (Lev. 26:8). It is not the Kingdom approach to sit back and wait for someone else to break through and then come on board. The greatest measure of blessing comes when you make that firm commitment when reaching the fulfillment of the vision seems like an impossibility. It is when we as a community come to realize the principles of covenant that we will accomplish our vision and calling in a manner that will leave us in wonder of our Lord. In a world of individualism, we need to come to understand the value and potential of covenantal relationship, it is only then that we as individuals will come to realize the utmost desires of our heart. Knitting your heart with others in the Kingdom will be the key to your walk of victory and fulfillment. Alone we will never arrive at our God ordained destiny.