

**Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us**  
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,  
and shew my people their transgression,  
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

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## **Vital Biblical Topics**

### **Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully**

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## **Establishing a Church Group**

### **Where is the True Church?**

This question is asked by thousands of believers each year; and the answers to it are more varied than one can imagine. To make matters worse each denomination claims to be the **True Church**, the single channel of truth through which the Almighty is doing His work. You'll hear of groups calling themselves the **Remnant Church** the **First Church**, the **True Church**, the **Last-Day Church**, the **Apostolic Church**, the **Church of God** and so on. **The list is long.** We understand that there are currently over 2000 Christian denominations on earth and the number is still growing. What a tragic situation is this: that men and women in their millions should **delude themselves** into thinking that they can monopolize the Almighty's message and imagine that **He is working through their group alone and not through others.**

The truth is this: Yahweh can no more be monopolized by a single believer or group than He could be by a single farmer or farming corporation. He is too big for that, and the sooner **denominational leaders realize this fact the better it will be for the believers in their groups.** Admittedly, the Almighty does work more successfully with some groups than with others; but that depends on how faithfully they apply the rules **He has set in motion** for the growth and production of spiritual harvests.

Yet, paradoxically, according to the Scriptures the Almighty God of Israel does have only **one church** - one body - on earth:

1 Corinthians 10: 17: *"For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."*

1 Corinthians 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.*  
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.*  
14: *For the body is not one member, but many."*

Colossians 1: 18: *"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead;"*

Romans 12: 4: *"For as we have many members in **one body**, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are **one body** in Christ, and every one members one of another."*

The official register for this **one body** - the true church - is called the **Lamb's Book of Life.** It is the only church register recognized in the courts of heaven, and if you do not have your name in that book, **then no matter where else it may be recorded it will avail you nothing in the Day of Judgment.**

To join the **True Church**, which has its register in heaven, a person must have faith in **Yahweh the Almighty God of Israel** and personally accept the salvation which He has freely offered through faith in His Son **Jesus Christ. (Yahshua the Messiah)** In addition to faith, **which is the starting point of one's walk with God**, a believer must exhibit his/her faith by endeavouring to keep Yahweh's commandments. **Faith**, in other words, must find expression in **obedience**. The moral laws we are expected to obey are recorded in the first few books of the Bible. They are amplified and explained in the **Sermon on the Mount** and repeatedly demonstrated in the lives of the prophets, the Apostles and the Saviour himself.

But where on earth is the **True Church**? Can anyone point to this or that denomination and say, “**Here is the True Church of the Almighty God. All its members have the required faith and they are all obedient.**” It would be wonderful to be able to point to any group and say that with conviction. But the truth is we dare not - **because it would not be true**. For the fact is, you will not find all the members of the true church in one denomination. Nor will you find many denominations which do not have at least one member of the true church. In other words, the members of the **true church** are at this moment in time scattered throughout the various groups of Christendom. **This conclusion shouldn't really come as a surprise to anyone**. It is obvious. But one day soon, there is going to be ‘**one flock**’ under the Good Shepherd; and only then - for the very first time in centuries - we will be able to point to a single company and say, “Here is the **True Church of God.**” (John 10: 16) In the meantime a believer has one of two options to follow if he/she wants to “**join a Church.**”

- He (or she) may look around for a Christian group whose doctrines and behaviour are nearest to what the Bible teaches, and worship the Most High each Sabbath day with that group.
- Or if such a group does not exist in the area, he may, under the Almighty's prompting and guidance, consider starting one.

## Guidelines

The following **guidelines**, and do remember that these are **guidelines not rules**, are given to those who wish to raise up a Sabbath-keeping group in their area. This step should **only** be taken in extreme circumstances, when it is not possible or beneficial to worship with an already established group in your area. So do not rush off and try to establish a separate congregation when one which has virtually the same teachings already exists in your locality; **because if there is no special need and leading from above, your efforts will end in failure.**

## 1. The Group's Name

There is much argument between groups as to the **name of the church**; but from the book of the Revelation we can plainly see that it is perfectly in order to refer to a congregation by its local name. e.g.

- The Church of Smyrna (Revelation 2: 8)
- The Church of Sardis (Revelation 3: 1)
- The Church of Laodicea (Revelation 3: 14)

Strictly speaking, these are **descriptions** not names. A name by definition is a **proper noun** by which a person is called. For example consider the statement: ‘**Sarah, wife of Abraham.**’

‘**Sarah**’ is her name, the proper noun she would answer to if called: whereas the phrase ‘**wife of Abraham**’ describes her relationship with Abraham. It tells us that she is his wife. But the proper noun ‘**Sarah**’ tells us what her name is. In the same way the phrase ‘**The church of God**’ is not a name, but a **descriptive phrase** telling us to whom the church belongs. It belongs to God. It is God's church.

As for the church's name: it would be more accurate to call her **Zion** or **Israel**. The point being made here is that the phrase ‘**church of God**’ is a **not** a name, but a descriptive phrase. However, for the purpose of identification, it is perfectly in order to use such descriptions as names and many groups do.

The ‘**church**’ (the original word ‘**ecclesia**’ means “**those who are called out and set aside for God**”) can equally be described by the name of the town, the village or the area in which the ‘**called-out ones**’ meet. In your

case it could be the church or congregation of (your town's name) or simply the Bible Class of (your street's or district's name.)

Our name, A **'Voice' In The Wilderness - Canada** is an example of the use of a local name to identify our group. We are nevertheless well aware of the fact that Yahweh works through **other believers** and **other groups** just as surely as He uses other farmers and farming corporations, **granting to each a harvest in line with their motives, doctrines and performance.**

## 2. Membership

Having a church register is perfectly in order. Registers were kept in ancient Israel and can be extremely useful. They help organize the work of the congregation and enable the leadership to contact and inform the believers in the area as to the various group activities being planned. But never forget that earthly registers - useful though they may be - are no substitute for having one's name on the **Book of Life**; because unless the members are converted and have their names on that heavenly register, having their names on the local register is of little value.

**A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** does not have a membership role, simply because our students are scattered around the world and we have absolutely no way of knowing their spiritual standing with God, or even what they believe. But, as stated above, having a register of members is perfectly in order and has many advantages.

## 3. Doctrinal Aim

It should be the aim of every Christian to **"fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."** (Ecclesiastes 12: 13) This instruction appears in our letterhead. **Yahweh** is the name of the Most High, the deity whom Abraham, Isaac and Israel worshipped. Our group considers the **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada Bible Course** of 21 lessons will further explain this aim and the fundamental doctrines essential for the development of Christian character. Feel free to print and photocopy those lessons in your group study. Correct doctrine is based on the Bible and the Bible only: and may be summed up in the sentence: **Trust and Obey Yahweh.**

In addition to the basic aim of faith and obedience, groups should also have specific or individual aims. Here are a few examples:

- To preach the **Everlasting Gospel.**
- To put Bibles (or even smaller books, like one of the gospels) into the hands of those who are searching for truth.
- To visit the sick or those who are in prison for the **True Word of God.**
- To help the aged, the orphan, the poor.
- To speak or write against the popular evils being practised in our society.
- To highlight a particular truth that is in danger of being ignored: e.g. the **Sabbath & Feast Days** truth.
- To point out the disastrous corrupt errors in modern **Bible Versions!**

These are just a few of the well known aims church groups could have. The list is obviously longer and you may conceive many more.

## Personal Aims

Besides these group aims, **each person** in the congregation should have a personal goal. The best, in our view, is **holiness** - to be like Yahweh and His Son **Yahshua the Messiah.** (Jesus the Christ) Other personal aims could be:

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Deeds</b>
Patience	Control the tongue & temper
Meekness	Give others a chance

Hospitality	Entertain the needy
Generosity	Finance church projects
Kindness	Help particular people
Diligence	Maintain church property
Wisdom	Write spiritual articles

**Love** - Not as the world knows love, but as God loves us.

These are, of course, the fruit of the Holy Spirit and every believer should aim to produce them. Understanding correct doctrine is important: but never forget that doctrine is merely the spiritual skeleton, the chassis, the framework on which character is built. The mature person, the grown-up believer will always be recognized by the fruit of the Holy Spirit. In other words, endeavour to translate correct doctrine into **holiness**. A person's character, behaviour, manner, personality, thoughts, words and deeds constitute the flesh that covers the bare bones of sound doctrine. In the final judgment we will be judged by our behaviour, not our knowledge of doctrine. **Remember this fact.**

## 4. Leadership

The unseen leader of each group must be the **Almighty Himself. His Spirit should be allowed full sway to lead the leaders.** Always bear in mind that Yahweh does not measure by human standards. He is not impressed by:

- A man's good looks, wealth, educational qualifications
- Social standing, fame, material possessions
- Talents
- Or even with his knowledge of the Scriptures.

Others are impressed by these things: but the **Almighty is not!** If you seek to establish a group in your area you should endeavour to judge as Yahweh judges: not by the outward appearances, but by **spiritual fruit**. Yahweh looks for:

- Repentance, faith, gratitude
- Faithfulness, honesty, diligence and dedication
- A desire to understand His Word
- Humility
- Obedience, which is faith in action
- Purity of heart, **holiness**.

Yahweh's warriors are often **ignored** by the world, **ridiculed** and **rejected** by those who **judge by human standards**; but in the final analysis they are the ones of **worth** and **lasting fame**. They will be the ones who will rule with Him during the coming millennium. Examples of the types of leaders Yahweh chose are:

- **Joseph**: Disliked by his brothers, but holy and wise.
- **David**: Not highly esteemed by his family, even by his father, but a man after God's own heart.
- **Jeremiah**: Totally rejected in his day, but bold and true in the face of enormous odds.
- **John the Baptist**: Forthright and very humble.
- **The Apostles**: To all outward appearances, ordinary men, but men who will one day sit and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matthew 19: 28)
- **Messiah**: Rejected of mankind and crucified as a common criminal; but one who was faithful unto death and who is scheduled to rule the mighty universe as **King of Kings** and **Lord of Lords**.

In (Titus 1: 5-8) you will find a detailed overview of the kind of believers who should be chosen as leaders. Qualities listed there are:

- They must be **blameless!**
- The **husband of one wife**. A vitally important point this one, especially in this world of collapsing moral

standards.

- Have **faithful children** who are not accused of disobedience, violence or unruliness.
- **Not self-willed.**
- **Not short-tempered.**
- **Not a drunkard or glutton.**
- Not a **brawler** or **contentious** person.
- Not someone who is in the church **for the money.**
- He must be a **lover of hospitality.**
- **A friend of good men.**
- He must be **sober minded.**
- **Just**
- **HOLY**
- **Elders must hold to the truth** (Bible doctrine) and also be able to teach, exhort and to convince the opposition.

As you can see, these are extremely high standards, and you may wonder if any elder can meet them all. But that is the goal. They obviously can be met with Yahweh's help - so strive for them. If a group ignores these Scriptural guidelines or engages leaders who contravene these biblical requirements, you can be sure that that group will pay the price in tears.

## 5. Premises

It is not necessary to own a building. The Church (called-out believers) can meet in a **private home** or a **rented hall**. Buildings can be extremely expensive to maintain and should only be purchased or built in exceptional circumstances. i.e. when they can be put to good use by a large group. The early church held most of its meetings in **private homes**. If, however, you can afford to build or buy your own meeting place, then go ahead. Our group, **A Voice In The Wilderness**, meets in private homes or hired facilities.

## 6. Finance

Use the tithes and offerings to cover local expenses and to finance the various projects the group may wish to undertake. Encourage the members (and we use the word '**members**' to mean those who attend the meetings) to pay **tithes**. A **tithe** is one tenth of one's income. The tithe is Yahweh's: it belongs to Him and we should all endeavour to return it to Him for the upkeep of His work. (Deuteronomy 12: 6, Malachi 3: 10) See our article on **Stewardship**. **A group of even a few tithe-paying believers can accomplish an enormous amount of worthwhile work for the Most High.** If at all possible, workers should give of their services **free of charge**.

This is how **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** operates. We are **all unpaid** workers: but Yahweh has blessed us bountifully. And, do not imagine it is all giving and no receiving. You may be sure that the Eternal will repay everyone who supports the work by blessing him/her in this life and in the life to come. God is no man's debtor. **He will always give you back a lot more than you ever give Him.**

It is not always necessary or even advisable to engage **full-time workers**. It's amazing how much can be accomplished by **part-time staff**. This will keep costs down to an absolute minimum; because the payment of wages and the upkeep of buildings are by far the greatest expense most church groups encounter. Both these costs can be avoided in most cases, thereby releasing valuable funds for church projects. Nevertheless, do recompense - with money **if need be** - those workers who are in need of help. A workman is worthy of his hire. **But be cautious here because you will be paying out with Yahweh's money.** (Deuteronomy 25: 4, 1 Corinthians 9: 9, 1 Timothy 5: 18)

## 7. Meetings

If possible organize the following meetings:

- **Divine Sabbath Service (Saturday AM or PM)**

This is the main meeting of the week and should last about one and a half hours. It should be a time for prayer, Bible readings, sacred songs, sacred hymns and sermons. See section 9 where the matter of study is dealt with.

- **Bible Study/Prayer Meeting (On Friday Evening)**
  - When the Sabbath is due to begin. During this meeting various books of the Bible can be studied - one or two chapters per week. Discuss a few verses at a time. End with a session of prayer. Encourage several believers to pray short prayers of a few minutes each. Some groups have the prayer meeting on a Tuesday or Wednesday.
- **Family Prayers**
  - All members should be encouraged to organize **daily, family prayers** in their own homes. This may consist of a Bible reading and prayer. We would rate **family prayer & Bible study** as the most important function in which a Christian family can engage. Disastrous consequences await those who neglect it. **See point 9.**

## 8. Numbers

A Christian group may start with 2 or 3 believers. The Master has promised, "***For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.***" (Matthew 18: 20) He keeps his promises. It is, of course, nice to worship with a large group of several hundreds or even thousands; but small groups have some advantages which larger companies lack. The size of the group is not the critical factor, so long as the Spirit of Yahweh is present. **If He is with you then you will be successful. If He isn't, then you labour in vain.**

## 9. Bible Study

The most important aspect of a group's activities is prayer and Bible study. You will find that the strongest members of the group will be those who are at the **Prayer** and **Study** meetings. In this article Bible study will be briefly covered. Believers should be encouraged to read the whole Bible through - yes from Genesis to Revelation. It is surprising how many Christians have never done this. They have read parts of the Bible, but never the whole book. And yet it is true to say that no one will ever properly understand the message of salvation until they have studied the Bible. In it Yahweh has detailed His plan in:

- **His Laws**
  - These tell us how we should live. Spend time reading these to the congregation. It is usually quite obvious which laws are ceremonial and which are not. If you have difficulty understanding them, see our article on **Ceremonial Laws**.
- **His Prophets**
  - These instruct, advise and warn us of coming events as we approach the return of Christ.
- **Examples**
  - These are the hundreds of real-life experiences illustrating how the Almighty works in the lives of people. He will do exactly the same with each of us - because He doesn't change. The real-life examples found throughout Scripture should therefore be closely studied by all who seek to understand how the Almighty God judges mankind.

Encourage group discussion at the prayer and study meetings. Have a question and answer session. Members should be encouraged to study at home with their families - mornings and evenings. The Scriptures constitute the spiritual food upon which believers live; and they should be read every day at least twice. Failure to do so will result in faintness of heart and spirit, loss of faith and finally to **sin**.

## 10. Sermons



There are several methods of preparing sermons. Here are two:

1. Using the **Bible Concordance**. Select a subject and read every text in the Bible about that subject. Then analyse those texts, separating them into group meanings. What is being said, to whom, why, by whom, for what purpose etc. Look for the instruction, the warnings and the overall spiritual lessons in the examples. Remember many of those ancient dramas are **living prophecies with meaning for our day**. Then deliver the sermon - quoting the Bible texts. It is most important to set aside your own ideas about the matter and to speak only what the Bible is saying. Resist the temptation to preach your own opinions. **Preach the Word!** (2 Timothy 4:2) Do this and you will win Yahweh's approval.
2. The second method of preparing a sermon is to **select a chapter** in the Scriptures, read it through and then explain it verse by verse. This is an extremely good method and was/is used by some of the world's greatest preachers. You'll not need extensive notes when using this method, because the chapter itself will keep you on track. Read a verse then explain it - giving an example if need be. Read another verse and explain it - and so on.

**A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada provides Sermon Notes** for those who may be involved in preaching and teaching the Word of God. These are brief notes which have already been used at our Sabbath services. They cover a wide variety of Biblical subjects, many of which are not dealt with in our Bible Course.

## 11. Summary

The basic requirements for starting a group are:

1. **Yahweh must be with you.**
  - o This is mandatory.
2. **Your motives must be right.**
  - o Why are you starting a new group in the first place? Is it hurt pride, the spirit of competition, or what? If the Almighty is with you and your motives are right, you will have success. But if He isn't, then failure lies ahead.
3. **Your doctrines must be based on the Bible.**
  - o They may be summed up in the phrase **Trust and Obey**, or **Fear God and keep His commandments**. Beware of speculation or following manmade traditions, no matter how attractive they may appear to be.
4. **Choose a name**
  - o Which either describes the particular goal you wish to attain, or one that links you with the town or district in which you live.
5. **You must try to become self-supporting.**
  - o The tithes and offerings collected from the congregation should be sufficient to finance all your projects. Try to live within your means. In other words do not spend more than your income.
6. **You must have regular weekly meetings:**
  - o **Divine Sabbath Service, (Saturday) Prayer and Bible Study**. You ought to have a group aim - a purpose for existence, **a good reason for getting started in the first place**.
7. **Finally:**
  - o You must be convinced in your own mind that **come what may** you will begin and finish the work Yahweh has called you to do.

**A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** started along these lines and over the years the Almighty has greatly blessed us. We have had our setbacks. Indeed had we known the guidelines we are listing here we could have perhaps avoided most of them; so we pass on this information to you hoping that Yahweh will use them to guide those who are making **genuine efforts** to raise up a Sabbath-keeping congregation around this wide world.

Oh it is so easy to make plans and ask the Most High to bless them with success. Better that you ask Yahweh to lead you, to direct you to do His will. If you do this, praying all the while that **His Spirit will be with you**, then success will be yours.

## Conclusion

Is it possible to take the **Everlasting Gospel** to every hamlet and hut in the world? Yes it is possible. It is well within our reach with His help. Is it possible to proclaim Yahweh's law to every soul on earth and to demolish the errors with which paganism and unbelief have invaded the Christian church? Yes, even this seemingly impossible task is well within our reach, **if the Most High continues to be with us.**

Is it possible to batter down the very gates of hell and rescue those who are virtually within the Beast's jaws? Absolutely so: this is not only possible but it is going to be accomplished - soon. Yahweh the Almighty God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel is about to do a universe-shaking act of rescue, when He overthrows the Temple of Dagon, (1 Samuel 5:) demolishes the altars of Baal and **inscribes His law in the minds of His people. Oh what a glorious and awesome day that will be. It is fast approaching!**

**A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** is greatly honoured to be engaged in this work, especially on the Internet. We are delighted to have this opportunity to share with you the great truths you have been studying lately. Pass them on! Meanwhile, we continue to pray to the Master that He will bless you abundantly with mercy, enlightenment, direction and spiritual strength to serve Him as you ought to. And now may:

*The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:  
The LORD make his face shine upon thee,  
and be gracious unto thee:  
The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.  
(Numbers 6: 24-26)*

Additional sermons regarding the Christian church are:

- **The Perfect Church** Have you found it?
- **Yahweh's Church** Have you found your place in it?
- **Iniquity in the Christian Church** What is iniquity? Find out here.

**AMEN!**

**In the Son's Name - For the Father's glory.**  
*Elder: Max W. Mader*

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