

# **Plant and Grow a Strong Messianic Fellowship Set Apart Ministries, Inc.**

## **Building up an army of worshippers!**

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Undershepherd

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Shalom to all of you who are planting and growing Messianic Fellowships.

You are gathering together to study Torah! No longer are you gathering in an established "church" and you take delight and joy in what Messiah has been showing you through His Ruach and His Word.

If you are like we were, at some point you will find that you miss corporate worship and praise. It has been wonderful to join in such worship and gatherings when we have been to conferences or with larger groups than our own who have musicians regularly leading the worship. But on our own, we do not have musicians who are able to provide worship music on a weekly basis.

Yet we know and experience that as we come into His Presence through praise and worship in song and dance we are strengthened! Worship and warfare in the heavenly places go together. We don't want to miss out on that!

***"Let the high praise of Yah be in our mouths and a two edged sword in our hands!"  
Psalm 149***

What to do? You may want to try what has been a blessing to us in Set Apart Ministries. We use worship music from CDs and tapes, though CDs are much to be preferred for ease of use and quality of sound. Initially, it involved deciding what songs to use and then switching from CD to CD along the way. It also meant printing out the words of songs chosen week to week for all in attendance.

This was NOT very satisfactory as it was too disruptive to be focused in praise and not on the "mechanics" of our surroundings. Our process of worship music preparation has developed in several phases as none of this was easy to do overnight.

Two large tasks have been in progress now for several years, and make the weekly process a little more accessible.

### **Selection of worship music on CD**

Purchase the worship CDs. (We do not use copies or illegal downloads for this purpose.) Load all the acceptable worship music CDs into a hard drive of your computer in order to be able to compile them as appropriate for each week. We use Roxio but there are other software programs available such as Windows Media Player. Roxio offers better ability to blend and make the transitions between songs more smooth though other programs offer something similar.

By "acceptable" we mean that there is nothing in the lyrics that would in any way contradict or dispute what we believe to be true about Messiah or His Word or our halachah (the way we walk) in Torah. Since music is one way of memorizing the Word, we attempt to have most of our music be straight from Scripture or very clearly Scripturally based. Songs teach beliefs so we take this consideration seriously.

We use a mix of Hebraic worship music from many artists as well as a scattering of some contemporary Christian worship music. This has been intentional in part, to welcome those just coming into Torah understanding who may still be most comfortable with the Name of Jesus. It is a sort of "bridge" for them. We see different levels of understanding as people mature and grow in their knowledge of Torah so have determined to leave the matter of how one addresses Him between Him and the person. As a community, we prefer "Yeshua" or a similar transliteration. (There is an article about our practice on the use of the Name in the Community Participation Guidelines portion of our website, [www.set-apart-ministries.org](http://www.set-apart-ministries.org) )

### **Printed Songbooks**

Gather together all the lyrics of the songs and print them up in alphabetized order in a three ring binder for weekly community use. We have usually kept it to one song on a page since we add lyrics from time to time and this makes it easier to keep them alphabetized. We use tabbed dividers for the alphabetic groups and a heavier paper weight with reinforcements for the holes to prolong the life. (We are on the second set of binders, in part due to need for larger size, in about 6 years.)

We have added the Shema, and the Blessings for before and after Torah readings at the front of the book and a "Psalms" tab as well.

As we prepare each week's worship music, we usually find a song or two that is very appropriate but isn't in our book so these songs are provided in a hand-out which gives the list of songs to be sung, as well as some other relevant information such as which dances will be reviewed prior to the worship time, when shofars are to gather, and so forth.

**This is strictly for our community** and as we are smaller than 25 adults in regular attendance, we understand that we are not yet subject to the copyright laws. We also have considered plans to obtain that copyright permission and pay the fee for selected songs to print them up in comb binders for sale for other Messianic fellowship use. (If you are interested in this, please let us know!)

With this foundation work done (ongoing!), here is how we proceed weekly!

1. Selection of music is preceded by prayerful study of the Torah portion, Haftarah and Brit Chadashah readings for the week. With these themes in mind, several of us take turns preparing the worship music week to week, choosing appropriate songs from the library we have acquired.
2. We encourage people to prayerfully prepare in advance to be ready to come into His Presence but also know that there are many distractions that make it difficult

to set aside daily things in order to do so. Therefore, we begin with a Shofar Call to Worship and the Shema, and then follow that with one or more songs of "high praise," uplifting songs that confirm the weekly sidra message and help to "break through" any spiritual hindrances.

3. Our community uses flags/banners and Hebraic dance in our worship so part of the consideration of songs used is the balance of those that include dances we have already learned or are in the process of learning as a community. Our use of flags/banners is spontaneous and individually determined as they are led. We have a variety of colors available as well as information as to the spiritual meaning of each color, encouraging people to be sensitive to and aware of those meanings as they use them in connection with the music.
4. Generally, we have about 80 minutes of worship music, beginning with the Shema and high praise, then various pieces as they fit, winding down to a more quiet personal level of worship prior to the prayer time. For us, this has been opened and closed by someone, chosen by prayerful lottery the previous week, and in between, opened for personal petition, praise, Scripture readings, etc. as appropriate. The concluding worship time continues to follow the theme of the current study in preparation for our study time immediately afterward.
5. We have found that it is best to schedule our praise time prior to study as all involved are strengthened and more ready to focus, understand and receive the messages from the Scriptures.

I hope these few thoughts will be helpful to you as you consider the importance of praise and worship time for your community, even if you don't have any "live" musicians within your group!