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## **From The President**

I cannot believe it has been six weeks since the NJF retreat in New York. The scripture says:

“Oh, how good, how pleasant it is for brothers to live together in harmony. It is like fragrant oil on the head that runs down over the beard, over the beard of Aharon, and flows down on the collar of his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon that settles on the mountains of Tziyon. For it was there that Adonai ordained the blessing of everlasting life. (Tehillim 133)

I can attest to the sentiment of this Psalm. It was such a good time of fellowship as we gathered together in June. We had a good turnout of people from all over the country and most importantly the presence of G-d was in our midst. In addition to fellowship and food, we enjoyed teachings and the opportunity to get to know each other better. I feel that I was personally enriched to be in the presence of the men and women of G-d who attended the NJF retreat. During our times of prayer the presence of G-d was rich and it provided an opportunity for people to receive ministry.

It seems to me the scripture in Psalms 133 was experienced as G-d blessed our time together. We could feel His presence pouring over us and bringing refreshing. Just like the dew of Hermon was useful to bring fruitfulness to the earth by watering the crops so when brothers get together as we did in June, G-d sends the refreshing of His Ruach and He commands a blessing to His people.

As we continue in this summer season let us purpose to continue in the unity of G-d and allow His refreshing presence to invigorate our souls.

Brachot B'Yeshua

Michael Calise

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## ELUL - A Time to Reconnect by Rabbi Carol Calise

Elul is the month that precedes Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This month is traditionally considered to be a time of spiritual preparation as we anticipate the coming Holy Days. The name “Elul” is thought by many to be an acronym for:

אֲנִי לְדוּדִי וְדוּדִי לִי

“Ani L’Dodi for Dodi Li” - I am My Beloved’s and My Beloved is Mine from Shir haShirim (Song of Songs) 6.3. This is thought by the sages to summarize the relationship between Adonai and His people. The heart of G-d is for each person to receive His love and to walk in close communion with Him.

Traditions associated with this month are the recitation of s’lichot (prayers of repentance) and the daily sounding of the shofar directing us towards the kingship of Adonai. The sages believe that Adonai is nearer to us in this month. In fact, the phrase “the King is in the field” is used during this month by the rabbis to indicate that G-d is very near to His people. It means that the king is not hidden away in the palace but has come to the field so anyone can approach Him easily. They indicate that the verse, “Seek the L-RD while He may be found; call on Him while He is near.” Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 55:6 speaks of the heart of this month. In addition, Tehillim (Psalms) 27 is read every day throughout this month.

The month of Elul this year begins on August 23. Of course, as Messianic believers, we know that G-d is accessible to us on a daily basis and we can approach Him with confidence through the blood of the Messiah. However, I believe that the mo-edim (feasts of the Lord) are appointed times by Adonai to encourage us to focus on certain aspects of G-d and our relationship with Him. At Passover we focus on freedom through the blood of the Passover Lamb. At Shavuot we receive a fresh outpouring of the Ruach (Spirit). Elul is a time for us to reflect on our relationship with Adonai and make sure we are abiding in the vine. It is a time to reconnect.

*-continued on page 4*

## Upcoming Events

General Council  
Anaheim, California August  
7-11 2017

Rosh Hashanah  
September 20-21

Yom Kippur  
September 29-30

Sukkot  
October 4-11

## Connect With Us

The National Jewish Fellowship has a Facebook page where you can connect with us and see upcoming events and be informed of things happening in the Jewish world. Type in National Jewish Fellowship of the AG in the search box on Facebook and that will take you to our page.

## NJF Officers

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I would encourage each one of us to read Tehillim 27 daily during Elul this year and allow Adonai to encourage our hearts with it. Once we begin our preparation for the High Holy Days, it is easy to forget what it is all about. We are focused on sermon preparations, liturgy selection, and reaching out to bring our unsaved Jewish friends and family to our services. These things can consume our hearts and mind. We need to remember that it is all about Adonai. Personally, it should be a time of renewing our relationship with HaShem and taking care of any issues that have hindered us or as the writer of the book of Messianic Jews (Hebrews) puts it, taking care of “those things that have easily entangled us.”

For our Jewish people whom we are reaching out to share the Besorah of Messiah Yeshua (Good news of Jesus the Messiah), it is about directing them to the love of their Creator who has established a plan for the atonement of their sins. We need to encourage them that Adonai is desirous of that personal relationship if they would simply do teshuvah - repentance - and turn from their sin and accept Adonai's way of salvation through the atoning work of Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah.

I think the heart of Tehillim 27 is found in verse 8: “My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek.” May this be a time where we truly seek Adonai. May we hear the longing of our hearts and of His heart towards us and set aside that time to draw near to G-d and receive His love for us. May we seek His face just because we love Him and not because we have a list of things we need Him to do for us. (Yes, He is interested in helping us with our lists, but that is such a small part of what He desires for us.) Let's prepare our hearts for the High Holy Day season and experience G-d in a greater way this year. May we each have the heart of King David: “Just one thing have I asked of ADONAI; only this will I seek: to live in the house of ADONAI all the days of my life, to see the beauty of ADONAI and visit in His temple.” (Tehillim 27.4)

## **PRAYER POINTS FOR OUR JEWISH PEOPLE DURING THE MONTH OF ELUL (August 23- September 20, 2017)**

- ✿ For a personal desire to know Adonai and devote our lives to Him wholeheartedly. Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:5
- ✿ For protection and safety of Jewish people around the world and in Israel . Tehillim (Psalms) 121:4
- ✿ For anti-Semitic attitudes and actions in the countries of the world to be exposed and dealt with. Beresheet (Genesis) 12.3
- ✿ For people to understand that Adonai desires only good for His people and He has plans for our future to bless us. Yermiyahu (Jeremiah) 29:11
- ✿ For a returning to the G-d of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov and a hunger to know Him personally among our Jewish people. Qohelet (Lamentations) 5:21
- ✿ For Jewish revival - a great harvest of Jewish people coming to faith in their Messiah - Yeshua. Jewish revival will be part of the key to the return of Messiah. Mattityahu (Matthew) 23.39
- ✿ For a fruitful High Holy Day season—Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur. Romans 10.1
- ✿ For the promised outpouring of the Ruach (Spirit) upon all Israel. Yoel (Joel) 3:1 (alt. 2:28)