

# Community Living – Planning Ideas\*

## Individual Preparation

A family who plans to leave the city to join a community in the country needs to begin making personal preparation in advance.

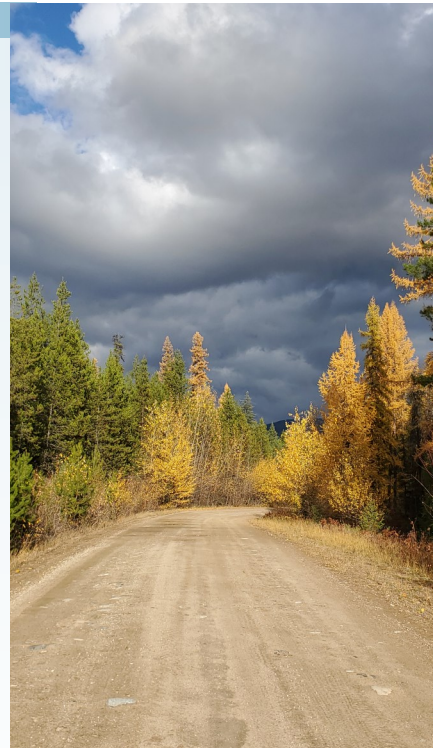
The first place to start: Make this a matter of serious prayer, strengthen your relationship with, and reliance on, God the Father and the Lord Yeshua our Messiah. Yeshua specifically tells us to pray about the flight He knew we would have to take at the end: Pray that your flight will not be in the winter [i.e.: the last minute] or the Sabbath (Matthew 24:20). Get your heart right, and your attitude right.

We have great trial coming, and it will be hard. But rid yourself of the thought that it will be too hard; with God nothing is impossible. Will we murmur and complain like the children of Israel in the desert? That won't go well for us if we do. Work on banishing complaining from your life. Complaining about circumstances you are facing is the same as complaining to God for leading you the way He is leading you. (Exodus 16:8 "...for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD.")

## Practical Steps To Take—Systematically Reduce Debt

Make a concerted effort to get out of debt. If you have credit card debt, start paying it off, beginning with the highest interest rates. Pay off any new charges in full each month in addition to the interest and principal due, and as much additional principal you can afford on past debt. When possible, get in the habit of paying cash or check for purchases. Work toward selling or paying off anything that is financed, such as a car or house. Downsize as much as possible, to something that you can afford outright. Begin to downsize your other extra possessions as well—what can you sell online or at a garage sale? (Proverbs 22:7 The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower is servant to the lender.)

If you own a home, put it on the alter, ready to be sacrificed at any time. All sacrifices are to be without blemish. If you keep your belongings in an unblemished state, you will be able to sell them whenever you need to. Begin to make needed repairs and prepare your home to look attractive to potential buyers.



*Let the beauty of God's creation call you to a simpler life.*

### Inside this handout

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### Special points of interest

- How to prepare individually
- How to find community
- Choosing a leader
- Responsibility to leadership
- Determining the type of community you want to create

\*These are discussion points for consideration, not rigid guidelines. Each community will differ in many ways.

## Nurturing A New Mindset



Watch movies and videos that help get you in the proper mindset and begin to train yourself for essential skills. This would involve things like gardening, food preservation (canning, fermenting, dehydrating, etc.), sewing, plus essential trade skills such as basic mechanics, carpentry, electricity, and plumbing. Take first aid training.

Similarly, build a library of resource books in all of these skills for when you cannot buy or sell, or there is no internet or power. This can include Bible study tools (concordance, lexicons, etc.), educational resources for homeschooling, do-it-yourself home and vehicle repair manuals, communication via ham radio or other means if

cell phones go down, living off grid, gardening problems and solutions, sewing instructions, wild edible plant identification, “prepper” manuals, etc.

Begin to make purchases geared toward a country lifestyle. This would include things such as a quality chainsaw (minimum 24” bar, with extra bars, chains, and sharpener), safety equipment (eye and ear protection, steel-toed shoes), water filtration, pressure cookers and canning supplies, garden tools, wood cook stove, medical equipment and supplies, etc.

Consider homeschooling. Teach age appropriate lessons to your children to prepare them for country living.

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*The Organic Prepper lists 350 links to self-reliance: <https://www.theorganicprepper.com/the-self-reliance-manifesto-more-than-300-resources-to-guide-you-on-the-path-to-freedom/>*

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### Make a Plan

Collectively, these ideas can seem overwhelming and “analysis paralysis” can set in.

Some people feel that if they can’t move to the country today, there is nothing they can do today, but that simply is not true.

Set goals and develop action plans so that the task ahead is more manageable. List your goals, set timeframes, map out a strategy, and break it into manageable tasks.

Even small steps, if taken daily, will quickly add up to help you get ready to leave the city.

### Prepare Your Body

*Nurture your immune system.* Dr. Sandra Darling with Cleveland Health Clinic recommends including lots of fresh garlic, prebiotics, and antioxidants to boost your immunity.

*Start simplifying your diet,* and reducing processed foods. Natural foods maintain their vitamins and nutrients. Processing the foods can remove or damage the natural nutrients, and also often contain a lot of added sugar, salt, and oils (many of which are unhealthy).

*Maintain a healthy weight.* A simple, natural diet, accompanied with regular exercise can help your body get in the proper shape to handle the rigors of country living.

*Get plenty of sleep.* Cornell University states that chronic lack of sufficient sleep not only leads to reduced productivity, but can also triple your risk of developing colds and flu, and cause food cravings leading to obesity. Even diseases like diabetes and cancer are linked to lack of proper sleep. Source: <https://www.ccmr.cornell.edu/faqs/what-are-the-effects-of-sleep-deprivation-on-the-human-body/>

*Maintain an attitude of gratitude.* The American Heart Association says gratitude has a positive impact on blood pressure and immune function. A favorite quote Tom often repeats: “Your attitude will determine your altitude!”

*Stockpile health supplements.* In light of Yeshua’s reference to coming pestilence, building your immune system is of utmost importance, as is having natural remedies at your fingertips if you become sick.



*There is a time to play, and a time to work.*

Survival during the tribulation will require a community of people worshipping and praying, and working and playing, together.

## Finding Community

Because time may be short, you should first look within your current circle of influence: family, church family, friends, neighbors, and then have those people also look within their circle of influence to help grow your group. Reaching out to strangers should be avoided if at all possible.

Do not make permanent plans with people you do not know well. Simply wanting to leave the city for rural living is not enough commonality for a successful community. You should not consider buying into a situation with people you do not know well. If you do not know someone well enough to trust your young children or grandchildren with, you do not know them well enough to join yourself to them.

The size of the group can depend on several things, such as the size of the property and the cost to purchase or lease the property with the budget of the people in the group. Also take into consideration the ages of the group members. Ideally you will have an assortment of young and old.

### Screening potential new group members:

Write up a questionnaire that all potential families will need to complete. It should include core, fundamental beliefs and lifestyle choices, as well as questions that point out the challenges that will be faced to ensure that everyone has given fair consideration to exactly for what they are signing on. (See some starter questions, Appendix A, which you can adapt for your specific situation.) You may also want to visit them in their homes to get an idea of how they live, to ensure how compatible they are with the objective of your community. There will be community needs that everyone needs to contribute to, so anyone who signals that they are not willing to work together or contribute willingly would make poor choices for community membership.

## Be Not Unequally Yoked

It is essential that all families in a shared property are likeminded in as many ways as possible. This is really the number one rule. We are warned of this more than once in Scripture:

Amos 3:3: “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”

2 Corinthians 6:14: “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? [Torah-lessness, this means God’s laws, not man’s.] And what communion has light with darkness?”

As we continue on the path of the time of tribulation such as has never been, hard decisions will have to be made. Going into the situation with people who are as similar to you as possible is going to become more and more important with each passing day. The major areas would include:

- Sharing religious beliefs
- Similar values for family life, childrearing, cleanliness
- Similar lifestyles, including those related to diet (for times when there are community meals).

This is not an exhaustive list. Righteous people display the fruits of the spirit; unrighteous people display the works of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16-26)

## Mission Statement

Work out a formal statement of your objectives, core beliefs, and other pertinent information that you may find helpful in laying out your goals for community.

With your mission in mind, write up community guidelines for living, based on principles found in Scripture. Refer to 1 Timothy 5, as well as Torah principles. (See also Appendix B, attached.) The first thing Yehovah did when He brought Israel out of Egypt was give rules for righteous community living. The principles found in Torah should serve as the basis for your community.

Deuteronomy 4:5-8 "Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' "For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?"

## Leadership



Nowhere in Scripture do you find where God set up His church as a democracy. Good thing, or we might be worshipping a golden calf today. (Exodus 32)

True leaders are appointed by God. If you don't have true leadership, you will have far more fragmentation in the group, and self reliance as opposed to a community mindset. Choose a community whose leader

is Spirit led, who has demonstrated that he is able to rightly divide the word of truth. He should have a proven track record of stability, honesty, service, wisdom, talents and ability to be a suitable leader. (Refer to 1 Timothy 3:1-13 for qualities you want in your leaders.)

If you decide a certain leader is someone who you can depend on and support when life or death situations arise (and they are guaranteed to arise before the Second Coming), you may have found your community. If you cannot submit to this leader, do not join this community. Remember, leadership is not an option, it is God's design.

## Group responsibility to leadership

Hebrews 13:17 "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."

1 Timothy 5:17 "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine."

Hold them up and support them (Exodus 17:12).

Be wise in how you approach them if you think that they are taking on too much. There are two examples of this in the wilderness story, but how the situation was approached was dramatically different, as were the results. Do not murmur and plot against them to usurp their authority like Korah (Numbers 16). Instead, advise setting up helpers in a reasonable manner to help bear their responsibilities as Jethro advised Moses (Exodus 18: 13-26).

Do not murmur and complain about leadership, as you may actually be rejecting God: Numbers 14:2-12 "...How long will these people reject Me?..."

If you do have a disagreement with the leader, guard against displaying a "we will not have this man rule over us" mentality (Luke 19:14). Remember that it is God's design to have leadership. If you have ought against your leader, first approach him privately (Matthew 18). Turn your ear from those who would complain to you instead of going to the source (Romans 16:17-18). Don't believe rumors about him without two or more witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19).

Individuals need to also recognize that leaders need the same measure of grace as everyone else, as mistakes likely will be made along the way. No one is perfect, not even the best of leaders. None have training and experience in running a community, let alone during great tribulation. Overseeing a 24/7 community is not the same as overseeing a weekly fellowship. Be their helper and rearguard, not their usurper and complainer.

## Community or Commune?

Finances are one of the main causes of discord in a marriage, and will be even more so in a community of families. Guidelines need to be set for how to handle community expenses, which could include the purchase and maintenance of essential equipment which benefits the entire community (example: snow removal equipment, tractor, log splitter, etc.) Options are to break it down by number of families, or by number of adults.

How expenses are handled are the basis of the type of community you will form. Everyone needs to be in agreement on whether they want a community or a commune. What is the difference?

A community is where each family is responsible for their own expenses, their own home, and providing for their family, as well as shoulder their share of the collective costs for the community to operate. All of the labor, or expenses, are not laid on the shoulders of a few. Rather, each person needs to contribute a fair share of any need that the community as a whole requires, in labor and/or in finances. All can do something.

This is not to say that in a community each person labors or gives equally, but rather that each contributes equitably. Older members may be in better financial situation, but have inferior health or stamina for laborious tasks. They can perform administrative type needs for their labor input, and financially supply tools and resources that the younger members use for the more difficult labor to benefit the community. A balance needs to be found so that all are contributing equitably, although differently.

Contrast community with a commune (as in communism), where one central authority overtakes control of all of the income and resources and distributes them as the leader sees fit. The maxim of communism is "From each according to his ability, to each according to their need." If your community is set up to where some people work hard and contribute much, only to see the fruit of their labor go to people who are hardly working or contributing little, the hard workers have no incentive to continue bearing the weight of a few and may even quit in protest, and then the entire commune will fail for lack of resources.

God's word does not endorse communes, but does endorse diligent labor:

- Proverbs 6:6-11 Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise.
- 2 Thessalonians 3:10 ... If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.
- 1 Timothy 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Acts 3:42-47 must be taken in the context of persecution against God's people. This was not the standard for normal daily living. Also consider Deuteronomy 24:19-22, and Ruth 2:2,7-8,15-16.

While the choice is yours, we believe that a community where each member bears basically equal responsibility is in line with Scripture and is far more likely to succeed.



*Tom and Judy clearing rodent debris.*



*They are cute, but they are messy!*

## **Appendix A – Sample Adult and Youth Questionnaires (Modify to fit your property needs.)**

1. Please read the community core beliefs. Please share how solidly you are on board with each of these statements and explain any differences of understanding.
2. Please read the community rules. Are there any terms with which you disagree? If so, explain in detail. Are you willing to submit to the authority of the community leadership even when you disagree?
3. Why do you want to leave your current home? Do you feel that the Holy Spirit has convicted you that you should be living at this community? If yes, please explain.
4. Please describe your personal spiritual journey and your relationship with God.
5. When do you plan to move here? Do you agree to a 6-month probationary period?
6. How do you envision your life here? Please be very thorough with your answer.
7. Who would be moving here with you? Is yours a blended family with any stepparents or stepchildren? If so, what role with the natural parent outside of your home have at the community? Please be specific.
8. Is everyone in the home in complete agreement about coming to live here? If not, who, and why?
9. If you are single, are you currently in a courting relationship? If so, what does your partner think about you moving here and how will you handle a long-distance relationship? Will this person be visiting you on a regular basis? Is this person in agreement with the community guidelines and beliefs?
10. If you have children, how do you plan to educate them?
11. Would you be bringing any animals with you?
12. What skills and benefits would your presence bring to the community?
13. [Modify this according to your community specifics.] The community property is located in a remote, off-grid wilderness setting in the mountains, far from medical and other services. Cell service is limited and can be expensive (you may be able to purchase a booster to improve it.) Internet service is only available by satellite. Each resident is responsible for providing their own internet, power generator and gas. The nearest large city with all amenities is a 2.5 hour drive one way, requiring a tank of gas each trip. Have you figured all of these types of expenses into your budget?
14. Are you able to provide your own reliable transportation? If not, how do you plan to provide for your transportation needs?
15. Are you physically able to use your own chainsaw/axe/cross-cut saw to cut your own trees, split your wood and haul it with your own vehicle/equipment? If not, can you afford to hire a community member to do this for you?
16. Are you willing and physically able to maintain the area of property surrounding your cabin or RV?
17. Are you willing to participate in the required minimum 8 hours of volunteer service per week for the community? If not, please explain why. If yes, what type of work do you feel best suits you?
18. Do you have any construction experience? Are you physically able to build small & large projects for yourself? If not, and you do need something built, how do you plan to arrange this?
19. Are you able to grow your own food? Do you have experience with gardening and food preservation?
20. How is your overall health, and that of your family members? Are you dependent on any medications or medical devices, especially any that rely on electrical power?
21. Do you currently use any mind-altering substances, whether legal or not?
22. Are you physically able to live where you can get three or more feet of snow and where temperatures can range from -30C to +40C? Are you able to shovel your own snow? If not, can you afford to hire someone to do it?

23. How do you plan to support yourself financially when living in such a remote area?
24. Do you have a good credit rating? Do you currently have any debt?
25. Are you a citizen or legal resident in this jurisdiction? If not, where is your legal citizenship? If you are not legal to live here, what steps are you taking to ensure that you are legal to reside here?
26. Do you plan to own firearms in compliance with all local laws? Additionally, possessing a firearm does not guarantee that the property leader will permit you to possess it on the property. You must have demonstrated the proper level of responsibility in order to have this privilege. What kinds of firearm(s) would you wish to have? How would they be stored and secured?
27. Have you ever been arrested? If so, when and why? Are you currently/or need to be registered with any parole board, sex offender registry, or other similar agencies? If yes, please provide details.
28. Do you recognize that this is a private, not public, property, and that you are responsible to help maintain the privacy of the community and residents? Do you have any friends or relatives who would be frequent guests to the property? Are they following this same spiritual journey? Are you prepared to ensure that all residents or visitors to your household are in full compliance with the community rules?
29. Is there any other information that you would like to add to your application?
30. Do you have any questions you would like answered prior to your application being considered?

Please have all youth ages 14-17 answer the following questions separately & in their own words:

1. Please tell us about your spiritual journey and your daily personal relationship with God.
2. How is your relationship with each of your household members? Is yours a blended family?
3. What are your plans for when you leave home when you become a young adult?
4. Are you currently in a courting relationship? Will this person be visiting the camp on a regular basis? Do you have your parents' blessing in this relationship?
5. Will you be leaving a public school? If so, how do you feel about this?
6. Are you old enough to drive? Do you have your own vehicle? How do you feel about being this remote from any city?
7. Are you physically able to help your parents split wood and haul it each year?
8. Are you willing to help your parents maintain your home and the area of property?
9. Do you help with chores at home? If so, what types of chores do you help with?
10. Are you willing to participate in at least 8 hours of volunteer work per week for the general upkeep of the property? If not, please explain why. If yes, what type of work do you feel best suits you?
11. Have you ever grown your own food? Is this something that interests you?
12. What are your hobbies? What do you like to do in your free time?
13. What are your favorite movies and songs/type of music?
14. How is your overall health? Please explain in detail.
15. Do you currently use any mind-altering substances, whether legal or not?
16. Will there be any firearms in your home? If so, what is your experience with them?
17. Have you ever been arrested? If so, when and what for? Are you currently/or need to be registered with any parole board, sex offender registry, or other similar agencies?
18. How do you envision your life here? Please be very thorough with your answer.
18. Is there any other information that you would like to add to your application to live here?

## **Appendix B – Sample Community Rules**

These are topics you should consider for your community rules. This is not an exhaustive list, and each group will likely have special terms they want to incorporate.

Mission Statement: The mission of [name of community] is to ...

Leadership: Who is the leader, and is his/her role at the property?

Being in One Accord/One Heart/One Mind: Describe the belief system of the leaders and residents, and any worship services held at the property.

Property Ownership: Use this section to explain who owns the property, and lay out terms for people who may want to buy into the property.

Property Development: Describe the homes, buildings, gardens, and other features.

What would it entail to rent, buy or build a home at [name]? What happens if I build, and later decide to leave? Can I bequeath any home I build to my heirs?

Expenses: How are community expenses handled? Who makes these decisions?

What does it cost to live at [name]? Use this to lay out the financial obligations of members.

Why would I want to live at [name]? Use this to show the benefits of living in your community.

Where and what medical facilities are available in the area?

Are animals (pets and livestock) allowed? What rules apply to them?

What is expected from guests and residents?

Who is liable for any injury, loss, or damages to me or my property?

What is the policy on alcohol, tobacco, recreational drugs, and firearms?

What is the process of removing non-obedient residents?

Acceptance of Terms: Have a signature line where each adult signs.